THE PRIEST

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

" Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
" Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven
" To their own vile advantages shall turn
" Of lucre and ambition, and the truth
" With superstitions and traditions taint."—*Milton.*

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THE PRIEST.

CHAPTER VI.

> "Youth no less becomes
> The light and careless livery that it
> Than settled age his sables and his wee
> Importing health and graveness."
>
> "This is mere madness,
> And thus awhile the fit will work on him;
> Anon as patient as a female dove,
> When first her golden couplets are disclosed,
> His silence will sit drooping."
>
> *Shakspeare.*

"THESE are right pleasant times for the damsels of the Castle, and not abundantly irksome to my Lady's Page," said Philip Altham to Lewen, after a day spent in hunting, the Lady Blanche Evelyn having been an inmate in her father's house nearly a fortnight. "I question if its walls ever rang to more

blithe sounds than the gleesome laugh of the Countess' gentlewoman, or echoed a lighter measure than their gentle tripping along the galleries. And yet, verily, there are those who preserve their gravity and their sadness in the midst of all our revels, like a black cloud scudding athwart the azure splendor of a noon-tide heaven, impressing a frown on the face of nature, even whilst the gay scene flings joy and gladness over the whole earth, and would woo it to display a thousand dimples."

Lewen smiled; it was a smile of effort—an appropriation of the Page's remark to himself.

"They whose countenances lower ominously over the scenes which adapt themselves so exquisitely to your gay temperament, are the Countess of Arding and her Confessor, I imagine," said he.

"Oh, no, no!" replied Altham quickly. "These be they who are clad,

day after day, in the colour of the grave, who walk amongst us like spectres swathed in their cerements, and whom we would be surprised to see in any other garb. No, no; the night-shade springing up above a grave, I mark not,— it is on its native soil: I would start rather to find roses blooming there. It is when we see the poisonous weed luxuriating over a gay parterre appropriated to brilliant flowers of many colourings, that we shudder and wish it were not so. The angry billows may lash against a rock, and we may watch their foam, smiling at the recklessness of their fury, and knowing that they shall not shake the everlasting foundations of the barrier against which they beat. But when the angry surges swell over some light pleasure-vessel, freighted with those gallant creatures who seem to bespeak admiration and favour even of the elements, oh, then our hearts beat, and our

bosoms heave, and our eyes fill, and we clasp our hands and raise our looks to Heaven, and ask for mercy for them!"

Lewen smiled again, but it was a smile of a different character from the former. It was elicited by the enthusiasm of the boy, and it mingled an expression of pity and wonder.

"You seem to have lived in a world of poetry and vision," said he. "Your imagination inundates your mind, and its torrent sweeps away every trace of resemblance to those of your capacity and bearing. In truth, fair Sir, in conversing you touch some accordant note in the mind of your companion, which echoes your own strain, and produces tones, of which it might have been deemed that his peculiar instrument was incapable. One would imagine, that those hearts were indeed shut out from all possibility of admitting joyous impressions, that could resist the influence

of your gaiety in its happiest mood of sportiveness.

Lewen ceased, and Altham's eye paused on his countenance with an intense effort at penetrating his very heart. The Page retreated from that scrutiny with an expression half animated, half doubting, hesitatingly joyous, whilst light and shade alternated so rapidly, that it was impossible to decide which predominated. The eye was radiant in tears, but the mouth was surrounded by innumerable dimples ; the cheek was flushed, but the observer traced not, with certainty, the source of that bright crimson. He gazed on Lewen with a look, that blended astonishment with a more fervent feeling. Hitherto Lewen s address to himself, whether friendly, or whether the incontrollable result of some powerful excitement, had consistently preserved a tone of censure. His very

admiration had been equivocal—the tribute paid, as if compulsively, to talent, whilst his judgment revolted from the causes which brought that talent into play, and the purposes for which it was put in action. But now he had bestowed decided applause; his countenance blended its accordant harmony with the approbation of his language. The heart of the Page thrilled with unimaginable ecstacy; his arms were crossed on his breast, and unconsciously he bowed his head on them. The action was only momentary; but it expressed the vassalage of mind, of feeling: it indicated the homage paid by an extraordinary soul to an intelligence of superior powers, which that soul comprehended, appreciated, without possessing.

But these inexplicable emotions passed away, and Lewen had not perceived them. He had remained for

some moments in a trance of thought, his eye fixed downward, and its powerful expression concentrated on some invisible point. The Page spoke, and the visions, in the midst of which Lewen seemed to dwell, passed away. He descended from the communion he was holding with "bright essences" and spiritual forms, to the converse of the boy who stood before him.

"If this be so," said Altham, replying to Lewen's last address, "some mighty demon surely opposes the efforts of my benignant spirit, and shrouds in a mantle of impenetrable gloom those over whom I would throw a scarf of light, every gem of which should be a star, the whole a galaxy of joy and brightness! And this demon, what form shall we assign to it? *His*, who separates the wife from her husband, the mother from her child,"—he drew his breath deeply, then added, in a distinct

whisper, " shall we call it *the Confessor?* shall we call it *Valerius?*"

Lewen turned on the Page a full, forcible, and lightning glance. He grasped the arm of Altham. " Boy, boy," he said hastily, and his teeth were firmly shut in the violence of muscular exertion, and the clasp of his hand round the slender wrist of the Page pressed the slight circumference so forcibly, that his fingers almost met each other, " if, indeed, thou art not the agent of that demon of whom thou hast spoken, what, by the Mother of God I adjure thee, tell me what *art* thou?"

" *He* may best tell you who made me what I am," returned Altham, withdrawing his arm, and baring his wrist which was already blackening under the violent grasp of Lewen; " see thou hast marked me thine, thine only, thine ever!" he continued, throwing a despe-

rate energy into his tone and gestures; then dropping his voice, he added slowly, "and will not that suffice?"

Lewen turned on him a bewildered glance. The calmness which he preserved in the presence of others, from the Earl of Arding to his lowest menial, entirely disappeared in the presence of that young Page. The being who seemed at other seasons frozen into apathy, a senseless piece of mechanism repeating what had been engrafted on him, and moving at the will of those springs on whose principles his construction was built, in the hours of intercourse with a child, displayed a fearful susceptibility, a nervous consciousness, a restless anxiety, unaccountable and irrepressible. But he did not lose his dignity; his self-command was wrested from him by a power which he could not resist, but he preserved that ascendancy over others, which nature had given to him.

"Art thou mine, and mine only, and mine for ever?" he said, echoing the sentiment of Altham; "and hast thou asked; will not this suffice? No; thou hast given thyself to me, and shall I not use what is mine?—No; thou hast given thyself to me, and shall I not dedicate thee on that altar, on which all of mine already lies? And the censors are ready, and the frankincense, and the myrrh; and the men of God with their vestments are there; and the saints of the earth wait to bless the sacrifice; and the spirits of the martyrs and the blessed hover on the horns of the altar; and they mingle their harmony with the choral voices of those dedicated to God;—and for what do we delay? Behold," he continued, waving his hand towards Altham, but directing his glance from him, as if the persons he addressed were near him,—as if they were realities, not the visions his glowing fancy embodied, "'behold

a lamb worthy to crown the offering! My hopes and my passions, my thirst after honours, already lie there! And now here is another soul, with the bloom and the gloss of dawning life blushing on it, appropriating itself through me to thee—Oh Thou in Heaven! who hast been my Father since I entered this pilgrimage of existence, my sole and omnipotent Father! Upon us be Thy blessing! Upon him let the unction of Thy spirit rest, of that spirit which, doubtless, dictated this surrendering up of himself to me who am, in common with all humanity, thy creature, and who am honoured by being also Thy special servant! Wondrous are thy ordinations, which thus bring to pass, in a moment, those things which the courage of man would hardly have attempted, which his skill could hardly effect! Welcome," he added, turning suddenly to the Page, "welcome to the

life thou hast chosen, to the work to which thou hast dedicated thyself, my brother!"

The Page received the embrace of Lewen, and his cheek was pale with the ghastliness of death, and his eyes were fixed and glassy, outward objects impressing themselves on the organs of sight without exciting their inseparable and concomitant idea in the mind. He did not speak— he did not move. The functions of mortal existence seemed suspended, and he appeared to preserve his erect posture from the sudden rigidity of his muscles, rather than from an exertion of the will. Only his lip moved, and its motion was that of convulsive agitation; but it was pale—it was colourless—and its voluptuous moisture was parched by feverish drought. Lewen continued to gaze on him with intense ecstacy, with the rapture naturally produced by such an

event on a mind abounding with those sentiments to which he had just given utterance. The coldness that had hitherto characterized the man, disappeared beneath the irradiations of enthusiasm which distinguished the devoted religionist. His features lost their placidity—his complexion its paleness. The course of his blood, usually so tranquil, now flowed impetuously in every vein, imparting a crimsoned animation to his cheek,—kindling a sparkling fire in his uplifted eye. The delicious smoothness of his voice was gone, but it was replaced by a variety of impassioned tones wooing the ear to attention by their exquisite modulations—by the alternation of energetic zeal, and deep pathos. Perhaps Lewen was created with a soul susceptible of the most ardent and dazzling passions; if they had had an earthly direction, they would have been mingled with the

dross of earthly affairs; but they verged to a centre, blazing in the Heaven of Heavens, and they burned after that with a concentration of powers, each of which in its singleness would have obtained a terrestrial prize, and the union of which seemed to ensure to him that after which he panted. They were mortal passions aspiring after an immortal possession, and engrossed by holy ambition. They resembled the paintings of Him who "came down from Heaven a ransom for men;" the features were merely human, but the perfection of humanity; and the divinity was expressed by the glory that shone around his head.

Now he hung over Altham as over an immortal soul just rescued from everlasting perdition by his efforts. His eye paused on every perfect feature, and his heart exulted as his sight fed on it, that this form of exquisite workman-

ship was to become inseparably united to the divinity, even on earth, and, soaring upwards with an angel's wing, was to vault into the beatitude of eternity. The mind of Lewen pursued the vision: he recognized this angelic loveliness—in its immortal brightness scarcely *more* angelic, entering the eternal courts of Omnipotence; and he recognized himself as his companion, as his guide thither. He heard the hallelujahs uttered by myriads of voices, and he saw the light—" not of the sun, for the Lamb is the light thereof," purifying them from every stain of earth, and presenting them without blemish as purged by fire. He heard the " WELCOME!" more harmonious than those myriads of voices, swelling through the infinitude of Heaven, and filling it with the exquisite, unutterable, indescribable sound. And then the voice ceased, and the thunder rolled awfully, but there was no trem-

bling; and the lightnings flashed brightly, but there was no terror: all the agony of feeling that fills up the sum of human suffering, was banished thence: they bowed themselves down, and worshipped in adoration and love unspeakable: there were heard no wretched prayers extorted by fear,—no muttered supplications in which horror seeks to exhale and to appease itself. It was *Heaven*—Lewen felt it; his hand clasped the form of the young—the scarcely preserved Page, and he sunk on the earth, dizzy and fainting from exquisite emotions.

The Page was instantly roused from the stupor into which he had been thrown. Again he supported the head of Lewen—again he hung over him with agony intense and indescribable. His cheek was not less pale, his lip was not more tranquil; but his countenance was less fearful. Even the agitation of

suffering was not so oppressive as that calmness which seemed the very breathing of despair. The eyes swam in tears, but *they* indicated human feeling: their frozen glassiness was gone, and sorrow gave to them an expression indeed touching, but not terrible. The agitation was pathetic, not convulsive; the sternness of hopelessness was gone; there was the lovely tenderness of grief and compassion, melancholy but attractive.

The eyes of Lewen opened; they fixed on the face of the Page, at first with an air of abstraction, then gradually awakening to a perception of the past and the present. His features relaxed into such a smile as Altham had never before seen there; bright, sweet, and happy. His hand touched that of the Page with a grateful pressure, and he turned on him a look of love, uttering

in a gentle, but forcible and distinct tone, "My brother!"

Altham gazed on Lewen, and the expression of his eye was inconceivably changed. It burned with an intenseness that seemed to deepen its joyous colour. "Your brother! am I?" he said in tones that thrilled to Lewen's soul; "and am I not also your friend, —oh yes, your friend!"

"My friend!" repeated Lewen, again turning on him that sunny smile, which instantaneously restored to his appearance that gloss which ought to have belonged to his youth, but which his master-feelings had contributed to fade.

"Friend! friend!" echoed the Page in piercing accents; and relinquishing his support of Lewen, he reeled towards the wall, pressing his brow against it; with a laugh so withering, so prolonged,

so shrill, that Lewen involuntarily pressed his head more closely to the ground to exclude the sound of horror. "Friend! aye, they be friends indeed, who will serve you as I will serve you! They be such as will cling to you through time—through eternity! They be such as will surrender the body up *to you*, will relinquish the sports and the smiles and the happy cares of youth, and the ambitious dreams of mature life, and the hope of quiet and honoured eld, for the cave, or the cell, or the dungeon, or the waters, or the grave *with you!* They be such as would rather weave the shroud that should enwrap them *with you*, than the robe of revel in which they might sparkle for others! But this is not all! They be such as"—he threw his eyes wildly round the apartment, then strode towards Lewen, with a still, measured, and fearful step, his body leaning for-

wards and his hand extended,—"they be such," he continued, his voice deepening and lowering,—"they be such as would drag you down to the regions of darkness and despair and howling, rather than see you soar aloft to the seventh Heaven, whilst they sunk down—down—in the measureless abyss! They be such," he continued, again raising his voice, and speaking rapidly, "as would think no torture infinite, but that of seeing you rise upwards and upwards, whilst they fell lower still, the distance between you eternally widening, the chain that bound you on earth eternally lengthening, until finally it burst, and you soared away, to be seen no more for ever and ever! And yet they be such as to be with you—to be near you—to look on you thus—to hold communion with you thus, would endure all torture that *human fiends* have ever invented to agonize *human beings*. Aye

—and they be such as would bend their reason to your faith, and would err with you that your union might continue eternally. These be the friends of whom I am one! These be they amongst whom I will rank myself! These be my companions and my comrades! These be they amongst whom I will strive for the foremost place in serving you! *Less* devoted my competitors may not be, *more* they cannot! Come," he added, and again he laughed witheringly, "bring me to them, and let me make acquaintance with my compeers! We will serve you royally! Where dwell they? In the convent of Ignatius? Thither will I wander! In the halls of the Vatican? Thither will I roam! In the cells of the Inquisition? There will I abide! On the rack? That shall be my couch!"

Lewen had risen at the commencement of the Page's address, and he now

stood opposite to him with folded arms, and eyes bent on him, with earnest scrutiny. Altham caught, and returned his glance, with courage, not with defiance. It was a deep and prolonged silence; the one sought to read the other, and that other seemed to lay open his soul to the scrutiny, with heroic fearlessness of its result.

"Thou art worthy of the vocation whereunto thou hast devoted thyself," said Lewen. "He who would do thus for a frail human object, will do infinitely more in the service of Omnipotent perfection! My youthful brother, the passions with which you struggle at present, will be deadened in the life we shall lead together,—they will be deadened to the world, and they will be the more intensely devoted to our common master! Thou art mine! I have won a soul to Heaven! Thou art mine! and

we shall consummate our holy union in eternity?"

"I am thine. And on earth, even on earth will our union begin!" returned the Page, clasping his hands, and leaning on the shoulder of Lewen.

They meditated,—both meditated. Neither saw the other, and yet each was the thought of the other. It was a moment in which imagination dwells on a present object, as if memory recalled it during absence.

A laugh of mirth proceeding from a party passing the door of the apartment, roused them from their reverie. Altham withdrew himself from Lewen, seated himself, and seemed to sink immediately into his page-like flippancy of character.

"Aye, there be the revellers," said he, "arguing profoundly on the cut of the Lady Blanche's robe, and demon-

strating with mathematical accuracy the precise height of her shoe-heel, I dare swear. It is amazing to me for what purpose such ephemera were sent into the creation,—a larger species of fly buzzing here and there, who have neither beauty to excuse their inutility, nor use to plead for their want of comeliness. It is fairly to be inferred, therefore, that they were placed here to heighten the loveliness and beneficence of those who have both, by relieving the exquisite light with their mass of shade. It were a sight to draw tears from angels, to see the covey of laughing faces, vapid in idiotism and dulness, who surrounded the Lady Evelyn in her hunt to-day,—a cloudy mass blackening—aye, despite their mirth and their antics,—*blackening* around that face, which,—*also* despite of its sadness and melancholy—shone like a fair, dewy moon in a dark, starless heaven. It

moved me; by heaven, it moved me to wrath, that they should smile and smile —and simper—and snuff at jest with the air their nostrils breathed, and vault, and capriole, and curvet, and do their exquisite feats, whilst she, the queen of all, and who well deserved to be so, rode sadly onwards, neither turning to the right hand nor to the left, nothing diverted by their foolish quips, not a whit tempted from her melancholy, by their broad laughs, or the blast of the horns, or the notes of the huntsmen or the freshness of the air. Dull folly in truth irks me, for it is the passing of a counterfeit coin for the sterling gold of wisdom. But your laughing—jesting —merry—smart fool, is an animal to make me die of spleen,—he apes madness so bravely. Who but a madman would shout in mirth, as those flames play around his head, which are finally to consume him? And when do they

not play? Is not the air on fire with them? Is not the earth parched with them? Do not the waters blaze, and boil, and hiss, with them? All nature groans for us, and yet we can laugh still! Creation weeps for man, and he returns her tears with fantastic tricks and maniac gambols, and mocks the grief that should move him to wisdom!"

"Brother," said Lewen gravely, "I am well pleased that you mark the errors of worldlings, but comment on them with temperance, and employ your ardour and your zeal in efforts to correct them. Man is fallen and frail, and forgets that he was made a little lower than the angels, that he might be crowned with glory and honour; every day he sinks lower, and communion with the world sometimes obliterates the original impress of divinity. But there are stars yet amongst us which shall be guides to men, like that eastern

one, to bring votive offerings to the Saviour of the world. There are burning and shining lights, whose splendor shall be sufficient to disperse the gloom in which millions of immortal souls are wrapt, but they shall not be left in the blackness of darkness for ever. They shall be saved!" he continued, his countenance kindling as he spoke; "they shall be cast into the fire; but it shall be the purifying flame, purging away the dross, and, at length, surrendering them up to Heaven in immortal brightness. They shall swell the train of the saints of God! and ours shall be the hands to pluck the brands from the burning, and we shall receive a crown of stars, and be exalted to the supreme beatitude reserved for the saviours of souls. Is not this a glorious prospect,—is not the 'recompense of our reward' great? What though we be '*troubled on every side? We shall not be dis-*

tressed! What though perplexed? We shall not be in despair! What though persecuted? We shall not be forsaken! What though cast down! We shall not be destroyed!' What though—'In itineribus sæpe, in periculis fluminum, periculis latronum, periculis a gentilibus, periculis a gentibus, periculis in civitatibus, periculis in solitudine, periculis in mari, periculis inter falsos fratres: In fatigatione et ærumnâ, in vigiliis sæpe, in fame et siti, in jejuniis, sæpe, in frigore et nuditate?' All these will but enlarge the measure of the glory to be partaken of by us hereafter! What are the powers and the potentates of the earth, compared with the lowest spirit that treads the courts of Heaven! One drop of celestial happiness would outweigh all the delirious draughts ever quaffed by man in the most intoxicating successes of the passions, in the most rapturous plenitude of worldly felicity!

We are invited to the banquets of immortality, and can we stoop to partake of the gross sustenance allotted to our senses here? Well may the laugh of the revellers enter, as iron, into your soul! Theirs be the eyes that should dissolve in tears for sin and guilt; and every mirthful ring of their voices mounts to Heaven as a defiance of its judgments! Their hours should be spent in penitence and prayer, and all are devoted to mirth and sports! Their garments should be sackcloth and ashes, and they are arrayed in the softness of velvets and the delicacy of silk! Oh, the warning voice should be addressed to such! They may despise—they may deride its monitions, but that voice should not cease incessantly to pour into their ears, "repent—for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The Page turned very pale, and

shuddered convulsively. Presently he recovered himself, and replied to Lewen.

" And to what are *they* exposed, who shall plunge into the midst of this sea of wickedness, buffetting the waves with their single arm, and endeavouring to tranquillize that boisterous element, which required the voice of Omnipotence, ere its turbulence ceased, and calmness slept on its bosom?" said he. " Will not exhortation be answered by the laugh of mockery, or the sneer of contempt, or the cavil of infidelity? Be there none—be there none," he continued, drawing his breath deeply— " who have pored over the tomes of ancient story, who have pondered on the events of empires, and felt the mightiest to be bubbles,—who have called the blazon of heroes an infernal badge, stamped on them by the prince of the power of air, in recompense for

the zeal with which they have done his work,—who have dared to call the glory that seemed to glitter on them, the crimson exhalations of that sea of blood which they had caused to flow,—and sickening with the demoniac pomp of the Pandemonium which the multitude call the Temple of Fame, but which to *their* opened optics shows itself in the very brightness of its fires and the blazing of its flames, and the noise that issues from it, to be HELL,—have turned to the productions of sages, and becoming enamoured with their divine philosophy, and the spirit of peace that breathes in it, have believed no creed but that which they enforced, have been impressed by no dogma, but the benevolence they displayed? And what shall we say to such? Shall we demonstrate to them the mercy of our religion, by lifting up the veil that envelopes our holy tribunals, by unbarring

the doors of inquisitorial dungeons, where no light of the sun or of the moon ever enters,—where no sound is heard but the wail of woe uttered by those voices which have forgotten, that they ever had the power of combining other sounds? Then shall we drag the wretch from his cell, and convey him to the judgment hall; stretch his enfeebled limbs on the rack, torture him to falsehood, and then tear his soul from him even as he utters it, and send it flaming to the regions below? Aye—tempt him to his perdition, and then hurl him from life to the damnation into which he has been plunged by tortures begun on earth? Or instead of descending to the very abysses of the gulf, shall we stop mid-way, and enter the tranquil retreat from which the world is shut out for ever? Shall we penetrate the cells of those who call not the earth their abode even whilst they

continue on it; who separate themselves from communion with their species, that they may hold continual communion with saints and angels, whom they hope to draw down,—by what? by flagellations—and scourgings—and fastings—and torments of the flesh—and humiliations of the body! And what is the state of the spirit—the immortal essence? It is puffed with pride, with a conviction of self sanctity; it hath no correspondent humility with the humiliations to which its tenement is so ostentatiously exposed; it is clad in the phylactery of the pharisee, to meet the eye of God, whilst sackcloth envelopes the frame, to meet the eye of man! Here are vain emulations, and strifes, and wraths, and contentions, for pre-eminence in sanctity, in the sanctity with which Satan sanctifies, the veil of hypocrisy and imposture. But what is yonder dungeon dark and deep? There

lies some wretch whom plausible appearances have not deluded, who has not imagined that painful incarceration will work out for him that salvation which is to be obtained 'with fear and trembling;' who has penetrated the illusions with which they who should have enlightened, have attempted to dazzle him; but he has nevertheless been torn from all to which reason bound him, to which judgment directed him, perchance to which passion clung! Oh—are not those unutterable groanings of spirit, the agony of a heart severed from those ties in which it had bound itself with some beloved one? On their union all his hopes of bliss hung, and they have been dashed piecemeal!—How is he taught to repent of his former worldliness, and to comprehend the superior beauty, and grace, and loveliness, of a life dedicated to the God their religion presents to him?

They imprison him; they shut out from him the light of that sun, which was placed in the centre of the Heavens to shine on all, the aptest emblem of the universal bounty of the Creator. They permit him to inhale only noxious vapours, and suffer him not to breathe that air in which perchance he might hear the voices of angels. The moon and the stars are hidden from him; he may not view the host of Heaven burning there as beacon-lights to direct man to happiness. He is excluded from the prospects of creation, spread out by a God of love; he is taught to recognize Him in the midst of gloom and darkness; to raise to Him hands macerated by famine, inflicted by those who call themselves His servants, bound with fetters with which *they* have manacled him. Tortured in body and agonized in mind, a wretched victim from whose soul light is as much excluded as from

his eyes, he sinks daily to the borders of the grave, and dies, bewildered into doubt of the being of a God, who is represented as a father, but whose acceptable offering is practically enforced as the compulsive imprisonment of the body, whilst the soul is alienated from him, and at length denies Him! Oh, who shall controvert evidence such as this? And will not the disciple of the intellectual Plato, the magnanimous Socrates, the humane Cicero, the elegant Pliny, be very fond to exchange their doctrines for those of a creed like this?—Oh—" he continued with a laugh of ineffable scorn, "the eloquence of the hermit, Peter, must be exerted, to tempt the most fiery zealot to a crusade like this, where the mockery of intellect, and the scorn of talent shall continually pursue him, and harrow him to madness and impotence!"

"You are young and rash," returned Lewen, still preserving his calmness. "Your intemperate imagination has presented to you a picture of what does not and never will exist. It is not for you to raise the veil of the sanctuary with the temerity of a boy, and to rush presumptuously into the most sacred mysteries of our most holy religion. By what means the Father of all may be pleased to draw lambs to His fold, it becomes not us to inquire or conjecture. If we be His appointed instruments, His spirit will lead us, and we must work out His will, accordingly as He shall appoint. The disciples of those divine men of antiquity of whom you have spoken, admire the spirit of mercy which *they* breathe, but they forget not the terrible instances of recklessness and cruelty which the annals of the contemporaries of each present. And because, from

the erring nature of humanity, many of our brethren may be mistaken in regard to the nature of that service most acceptable to God, we must remember that the seal of the covenant is yet unbroken, that the truths of our religion remain immutable and unchanged. Forget not that they who presumptuously put forth their hands to touch the ark, died!"

The Page remained silent; his eyes were cast down, and if his countenance beamed not with conviction, its expression of disdain had disappeared.

He wandered to the window. It looked down on a verdant slope of ground, slanting towards a river. The figure of the Lady Blanche Evelyn was seen through the foliage of a grove, that bounded its western extremity.

"My thoughts," said he, turning away laughingly, "are like Shirley's management of his horse. He mounts

the animal with some difficulty, reins him in tightly, the creature starts from the direct road galloping on this side and that side, and all Shirley's skill is insufficient to keep him in a right line. ' Even so it is with me; I came to you with my heart full of the Lady Blanche Evelyn, wishing to speak to you of nought but her, and in truth it seems to me that she has been the very point from which I have continually diverged, of which I have said nothing. We have travelled together to the supernal realms of Heaven, and to the infernal ones of Hell, lingering but little on this planet of ours. Yet, in truth, if it contained many beings like the Lady Blanche," we would not wish to quit it! Oh, by our Lady, she is a peerless creature! so wondrous sweet, so tender, so touching, so kind, so lovely alike in her paleness and in her roseate glow of complexion,

that one would have imagined young Joy would have been enamoured of her, and have made her his continual home But not so. Sorrow contests his empire there, and, I suspect, more than half divides it. Had you seen her, as I did, with the gay throng to-day, you had thought her the pale, pensive Angel of Pity, just descended from Heaven, whilst the dew and the light of the sky still beamed on her. If she smiled at the remarks of my Lord her father, it was in such a sort, as she would say, my duty bids me show cheerfully, but my heart would very fain indulge its sadness. My eye never left her, and I saw the tears sparkle in hers when none else did; and I saw them gem her long lashes like dew-drops sparkling on a dark leaf by the moon-light. And then she became pale as alabaster; and when my Lord turned to speak to her, a glow

suffused her cheek under his glance, willing to spare him pain by so lovely and duteous and kind, a deception. I like that variableness of complexion in woman; it is the eloquence of the soul, it is a transparent veil of the thoughts through which they show all lovely and pure as they may be, as they *must* be; for that transparent veil of alternate blushes and paleness never enveloped aught but purity; it seems to me of such exquisite texture, woven by angels and spread by them over a kindred spirit, that no demon could imitate it in the service of guilt,—his workmanship would look clumsy and gross, and be instantly detected."

"You are deeply read in the sex," returned Lewen smiling, "and are well qualified to instruct a novice like myself, in all those intricacies, those doub-

lings and windings, in which the female heart differs from that of man."

"Aye, I know them well; never can you know them as I know them!" said Altham, blushing very crimson, then becoming as deeply pale;—"their power of passion, their energy of feeling, the burning enthusiasm which not even habit or education can quench, albeit they may smother it,—all these I have seen, and to them I can testify. Trust me, there is no love like the love of woman,—none that will dare so much,—none that will hope so fondly, even for the sun at midnight, even that happiness shall spring from despair." He paused for a moment, buried his face in his hands, sighed profoundly; then, by an effort raising his head, he displayed a countenance of indifference, almost of gaiety. "There is this beauteous Lady Blanche Evelyn,"

he continued,—"glowing with health and beauty, the pride of a noble father, the person in whom is to vest so ample a demesne, so exalted an ancestry, adored by all in whom one could judge she had any possible interest, and she has no happiness. This creature, who seems too bright to be moulded of our elements, is not happy!"

"It would rather move my wonder to see *her* all smiles, against whom a mother's heart is closed; who is fated to wound the maternal breast more deeply than all the struggles, which have formerly convulsed it, *could* wound it; and who feels, that the circumstances which separate her from that parent, involve her own eternal salvation! Can mirth, and the shout, and the revel, disperse thoughts like these, or disarm them of their sting?" said Lewen.

"Come, you reason well, considering

that you argue only on hypothesis," returned the laughing Page ;—" it is well that you confessed you knew little of the female heart ; these sentiments were, in all openness, sufficient to proclaim your ignorance. Trust me, no tie of mere affinity has the power so to subdue woman, to make her play such various strains, to alternate her joyous and her doleful moods so rapidly, as those of Lady Blanche alternate. No, no, we must search beyond the estrangement of the Countess,—far beyond the dogmatizing and the fulminations of Father Valerius ; we must penetrate even into the innermost sanctuary of a woman's heart, and see what image is enshrined there."

" Still I see but that of a mother utterly estranged, the term of whose estrangement may perhaps be eternity," replied Lewen solemnly.

The Page bent forward, looking

up earnestly into Lewen's face, with a glance that seemed to pierce to his very soul.

Lewen met that glance of mingled archness and mockery, with a steady calmness whose expression just touched on the verge of an inquiry.

Altham laid his hand on the shoulder of Lewen. Prefacing his remark with one of those laughs which seemed almost like the blithe carolling of infancy, he somewhat lowered his voice, leaning towards Lewen, and said with a keenness of tone that belied not his manner, —"Is it *love*, Master Secretary, think you, is it *love*?"

Lewen's countenance changed too visibly to have escaped eyes infinitely less penetrating than those which were now bent on him. His cheek flushed crimson, then became paler than usual. His eyes flashed intolerable brightness, but it was the brilliance of agitation.

He trembled. The accents of his voice were broken as he asked—" And who is the object of that love ?"

The glance of that Page was steadily fixed on Lewen, but it might have been questioned whether his vision was impressed by the object on which it appeared to be fixed, its gaze was so vacant. A single spot of hectic red glowed on either cheek, and the rose of his lips was deepened into a dry scarlet. There was no tremulous agitation of form ; a statue-like stillness pervaded his whole frame, except in the minute breathings which seemed each the effort of convulsion. The eyes of himself and Lewen met,—they recognized each other; yet each was so occupied by internal objects as not to discern the state of his companion. " Is it *love ?* And who is the object of that love ?" repeated Lewen. The Page uttered a wild laugh. " Let him who asketh

that question, answer!" he said, and his voice rose to the shrill vehemence of agony. There was a moment's pause; it elapsed, and the Page rushed from the apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

"But thou dwellest in the soul of Malvina! My sighs arise with the beam of the east; my tears descend with the drops of night. I was a lovely tree in thy presence with all my branches round me.——The virgins saw me silent in the hall; they touched the harp of joy. The tear was on the cheek of Malvina: the virgins beheld me in my grief. Why art thou sad? they said; thou first of the maids of Lutha! Was he lovely as the beam of the morning, and stately in thy sight?" *Ossian.*

THE melancholy of the Lady Blanche Evelyn, which had been so apparent as to attract the observation of the Page, who saw her only at distant intervals, was little likely to escape the penetration of that father whose affections and

whose pride were concentrated in her, neither, perhaps, the less strong because there existed no other point in which they centered.

The Earl had observed with pain, that sorrow engloomed her mind at a period, when it might have been expected, that her heart would expand with all the joyousness of youth and health and prosperity. He sought not to intrude into the sanctuary of his daughter's thoughts, from curiosity, or any motive so little dignified. He desired to comprehend the origin of her distress, in order that he might relieve it.

The idea of her alienation from the Countess, naturally suggested itself to him as the probable cause of Blanche's unhappiness. He recurred to it in her presence, and in doing so, mentioned the circumstances that might alleviate it, and afford consolation. Blanche listen-

ed to his arguments with attention, and she repaid his efforts by her smiles. But the melancholy that succeeded his silence, convinced him, that he must search deeper for the origin of her sorrow.

The Earl recalled the events of his own life, and he remembered the violent passion which had left its trace on every subsequent scene of the whole. Then he contemplated the beautiful figure before him, blooming in all the slight youthfulness of seventeen; he appreciated her loveliness with paternal pride, and even that scarcely overrated it; he felt that she was a being formed to love and to be loved; he knew, that in the domestic circle of the Duke of Suffolk she might have seen many flowers of chivalry, the pride of their nobility, who were worthy of occupying her. And would she not be sought? Was not the heiress of

Arding, with her princely dower and her high hopes, an object to excite the ambition of the best and the bravest? She loved, therefore; and could she love hopelessly?

The heart and the pride of the father repelled the suspicion. He resolved to seek Blanche, and to prevail on her to elucidate the point.

"This should be a mother's task," thought he; "but thy mother, my poor child, refuses to perform her maternal functions! And how shall I touch on such a subject with the delicacy and tenderness required by thy young and susceptible mind?"

Living in those habits of unlimited confidence with his chaplain, which were sanctioned by the manners of the age, the Earl determined to rely on his counsel even in this exigence.

Russell listened to the communication with deep attention. He ardently

desired to see the heiress of his patron united to some powerful noble, whose strong attachment to the infant church might support its weakness, and effectually contribute to elevate and strengthen it. He dreaded the influence which the Countess of Arding might exercise over the ductile mind of her daughter,—an influence, it might be expected, utterly subversive of those principles which it was the *hope* of his life to see extended widely, and the *labour* of his life to promulgate. He knew that the separate interest of each noble was becoming daily more important to the advancement of the reformed doctrines, as the augmenting indisposition of the young king threatened the fall of that powerful aid, which the sanction of the sovereign gives to every religion; and if the Princess Mary should succeed to the throne, the death of Edward might be considered as fatal to the establishment.

Russell hoped to see the Protestant nobles so firmly united, as to be able to resist any possible future attack on the church which they upheld. The extensive influence which devolved to the representative of the honours of Arding, seemed an inalienable prerogative annexed to its title, and would naturally be of the highest advantage to that party whose interests its head should espouse.

Russell did not doubt the sincerity of Blanche's attachment to the principles of that faith in which she had been educated; but he wished to secure her from all danger of being wrought on by minds more artful than her own, to act as if her devotion to that religion were less. Her union, therefore, with a Protestant noble was an event as ardently desired, as her perfect reconciliation with her mother was deprecated by him. Although conscience prevented any efforts to render the distance between the

parent and the child greater, he inwardly attributed their alienation to a providence watchful to make all events concur to the building up and the establishing of the true church. He believed that the Confessor's efforts to prevent their reconciliation were a master-piece of policy. He supposed that Valerius had rendered himself perfectly acquainted with every trait that characterized Blanche; that he attributed her melancholy to her desire of union with the Countess, which, he imagined, she would eventually be led to purchase by any sacrifice; that he prolonged their separation by these considerations; and, finally, that nothing but the immediate union of the Lady Blanche would effectually preserve her from the machinations of the Confessor.

Russell, therefore, received the communication which the Earl made to him on the supposed cause of his daughter's

melancholy with a satisfaction slightly shaded by fear. Educated as she had been with the Ladies Grey, dwelling in the bosom of that family, it was little likely that she should have had opportunity to make acquaintance, much less to form an attachment with a Roman Catholic. But a *possibility* of this did exist. Russell recollected how the love of the Earl of Arding and the Lady Joanna of Marleyland had risen and flourished, notwithstanding the opposition of their religious tenets; that they had been united even although their union was effected by an act which, to one of the parties, must have appeared sacrilegious, and which even now, after the lapse of so many years, she was endeavouring to expiate by continual and grievous penance. Experience, facts, the memory of the past, the witness of the present, proved to Russell the *possibility* of the Lady Blanche Evelyn's

becoming the wife of a Catholic, even in despite of her own strong religious convictions, of the opposition of her father and the friends of her youth. At this point Russell trembled, and he spoke to the Earl long and forcibly on the possibility. He charged him not to sacrifice the welfare of his daughter's soul, of so many souls who would be swayed to destruction by her example, by permitting the indulgence of her fancy, if it were so unhappily directed. He set before him the pliability of her temper, rendering her so likely to be led by those to whom the ties of attachment and habit bound her, even in those points where to yield might be perdition. The mind of the Lady Blanche, he said, was of a much more delicate texture than that of the Countess of Arding. She had none of the rugged energy of her mother, none of that power of opposition and resolution. Altogether she

was cast in a more feminine mould, which, although it might render her more attractive, made it also more necessary, that they to whom nature had given the right of guiding her, should do it with all gentle firmness, and be careful to sanction only such of her actions as should promise to be happy to herself in their results, and auspicious to the greatest of all possible causes.

The Earl sighed as the representation of Russell impressed on him the conviction of the atomic causes which are continually impeding the progress of happiness, too minute to be perceptible, but of consistence sufficient to prevent the regular evolution of its wheels.

Anxious and agitated, he sought the presence of his daughter, fearful lest there should exist a necessity of her subduing those passions, that sentiment,

which he had formerly found it impossible to vanquish in his own case.

The Earl returned from his conference with Lady Blanche, with a countenance pale indeed, but bright with pleasurable emotions.

"Congratulate me," said he to the anxious Russell, whose impatience had demolished the gravity of his exterior, and given his eyes their most splendid radiance—"congratulate me! The most consummate prudence could not have contrived, the most exquisite policy could not have arranged circumstances, more favourably than the effects of accident and the impulses of two young hearts have contrived them."

"God be praised!" said Russell fervently; then, by a sort of mental echo, catching the words of the Earl, he resumed his monitory character, and added, "In place of ascribing this felicitous event of which you speak, to the

effects of accident, admire it as the dispensation of a benignant Providence thus bringing to pass whatever shall conduce to the welfare of the true worshippers of God."

The Earl bowed and smiled. "I am grateful to that benignant Providence, and I bless its gifts," said he. "This moment of happiness repays the sufferings of many years, and relieves me from fears which had almost become insupportable. The felicity of my daughter and the interests of my religion are not incompatible. God be praised, they point in the same direction, and there needs no struggle."

Russell undoubtedly rejoiced in the joy of his patron; but he had so habituated himself to consider every hour, and every event that marked the hour, as presenting conflicts in which the flesh would war against the spirit; he had arranged the species of encouragement

which, supposing the worst in the present case, he must administer to his Lord; the consolations and exhortations he must address to the Lady Blanche; he had marked out his plan of conduct so accurately, and had so precisely estimated the most severe struggles and the most dangerous contingencies—that he felt some slight regret at the sudden demolition of the hypothetical functions he had assigned to himself.

That pardonable regret was quickly dissipated, and succeeded by as much sober pleasure, as the severe Russell thought compatible with the situation of danger in which those were placed, who like the men of Seir were perpetually to be asked, "Watchman, what of the night? what of the night?" He felt that he stood in the midst of a battle-field, strewed with the bodies of those who had been slain, and that enemies who had made the carnage were still on

the towers and the high hills that looked on it, awaiting the approach of new armies, whom they would add to the prey already spoiled, or *leave them more than conquerors!* Viewing his condition thus, he felt that mirth in him would have been madness. He was happy, for his hopes were placed on high; and he feared not what man could do unto him, for he was ready to seal his faith by martyrdom. His anxieties were for the church of which he was a member, and he desired its universal establishment because he believed it most accordant to the simplicity of the apostolic and primitive ages of Christianity.

All his *human* feelings were centered in the family of Arding. The present occasion, therefore, which included the happiness of one of its members and the welfare of his religion, permitted him to remember, with the preacher, that there

is a time for happiness, and for joy, but after a godly sort.

"The Lady Blanche then will marry, and who shall be her husband?" demanded Russell.

"He who would have been chosen by me amongst ten thousand," replied the Earl, in a tone that breathed more happiness than aught he had uttered during many years; "the young Lord Leighton, the kinsman of the Duke of Suffolk. I have heard the tale of their love from Blanche, and it is simply thus. Lord Leighton was the esteemed cousin of the Lady Jane Grey, and, as such, admitted to her intimacy, and consequently to that of her friend, Blanche Evelyn. Leighton was often at Broadgate, was often with Blanche. He was studious,—he was learned. Doctor Elmer admired and loved him; and the fair inmates of the Duke of Suffolk were soon taught to follow the example of a preceptor

whom they venerated. Blanche was the most susceptible of his companions, perhaps because she was evidently the most distinguished by him. Although the dower of the Lady Blanche Evelyn would be no contemptible addition to the revenues of the wealthiest of English nobles, hatred itself cannot suspect that Lord Leighton is influenced by it, so noble, so disinterested, so upright, even his enemies proclaim him. He loves Blanche Evelyn, not the heiress of Arding, he loves her, therefore, as she deserves to be loved. The blessings of God be on their union, as it shall be blessed by me! Even now Leighton awaits but a summons from Blanche to visit the castle, and request from the hand of a father his dearest treasure!"

"My hopes are realized!" said Russell fervently, "I pray to God that all which concerns his people may be auspicious to them as this union appears!—

Lord Leighton is one of the worthiest pillars of the church; and the most noble. He is a man formed by Heaven itself to succour the chosen in the time of their distress, and to appear a burning and a shining light before men. But wherefore, then, was the Lady Blanche so melancholy, and why did sorrow hang so heavy on her heart? Knew she not that you would hail such an union with rapture? Why, therefore, was her soul so disquieted?"

"The tenderness of the heart of Blanche Evelyn was terrified by the repugnance shown to her in that quarter whence she expected greater kindness and affection. I allude to the Countess," replied the Earl in a hurried voice, his countenance losing a great portion of its transient brightness. "She knew, moreover, whence this cruel coldness towards her originated, and she has suffered, she does still suffer, the most ex-

quisite anguish in the reflection that her marriage with Leighton will surely increase it. The consideration is painful, but it must not be suffered to prevent an event so desirable on innumerable important accounts, and so auspicious to the most important of all."

Russell signified his cordial acquiescence in this remark, and they withdrew to their respective avocations.

In a very few days the cheerfulness of the castle wore a more exhilarating aspect. The sadness of Lady Blanche had hitherto thrown a shade over the gaiety of her attendants; but very little of that sadness remained; and its vestiges were not constant; they appeared only at intervals, when perchance some allusion was made to the Countess of Arding, which failed not to remind her that her cup yet tasted of bitterness, that her roses yet had thorns.

Lord Leighton arrived at the castle of

Arding to claim from its Lord that boon which was to heighten all the felicities of life, and to alleviate its unavoidable burdens. He spoke of Blanche to the Earl as a lover who saw in the pomp and splendors of the world, nothing that could be put in competition with the woman he passionately adored; and he asked her of her father with a timidity, that evinced he formed his pretensions to her, not on his rank, his consideration, but on their mutual attachment, and on the unimpeachable integrity of his character.

Lord Leighton became the accepted lover of Blanche Evelyn, and never did happiness abide in two purer bosoms than those of the youthful pair.

The Earl sought an interview with his Countess, and he felicitated himself on the temporary absence of Valerius, believing that he should the more easily rouse her maternal feelings, and induce

her to extend to Blanche and her be trothed, those congratulations which he knew were necessary to the perfect happiness of the former. But the Countess received the communication in tears and anguish, praying for solitude, and refusing to admit the lovers to her presence.

To *them* the Earl softened the disappointment he was compelled to inflict, by the kind expressions of his personal approbation. But it sunk deep in the heart of the susceptible Blanche.

CHAPTER VIII.

"She was dressed in black, her skin was contracted into a thousand wrinkles, her eyes deep sunk in her head, and her complexion pale and livid as the countenance of death. Her looks were filled with terror and unrelenting severity, and her hands armed with whips and scorpions.——She addressed me in the following manner. 'Retire with me, O rash, unthinking mortal! from the vain allurements of a deceitful world; and learn, that pleasure was not designed the portion of human life. Man was born to mourn and to be wretched.——Every enjoyment is an offence to the deity, who is to be worshipped only by the mortification of every sense of pleasure, and the everlasting exercise of sighs and tears.'——This monster is called SUPERSTITION." *Carter.*

THE Countess was in her oratory,—she was kneeling before the emblem of redemption, before the image of the Saviour; her vestments were black, and her pale face looked more pallid from the contrast, and from the long tresses

of dark hair, very slightly tinged with grey, which hung on her shoulders and shaded her cheek. Her large black eyes were turned upwards, fixed in the intenseness of her prayers. Her hands were clasped round the crucifix to which she clung for protection, for relief, for mercy, for cessation of punishment. The humility of her attitude formed a strong relief to the proud dignity of her figure, perceptible even in its attitude of humiliation. She was an Athaliah in the posture of a Mary Magdalene. It was a personification of the passions subdued by superstitious terrors; or of superstition usurping the semblance of religion, clothing itself in vestal meekness, whilst the features that cannot be changed, become more marked from the unsuitableness of the garb that envelopes them.

The Confessor stood on the outside

of the curtain which divided the oratory from the outer apartment. He saw the attitude of his penitent, and he awaited in silence until she arose from it. Then he entered.

She saw him, and she advanced immediately, but slowly. There was a measured majesty in her step, according well with the dignity of her figure. There was no alacrity of welcome to a friend; there was the reverent courtesy paid by the erring creature to her spiritual director, the sanctuary of her guilt, her misery, and her penitence; to whom duty had obliged her to reveal all her crimes, whilst she was humbled in his presence by the consciousness that her heart was bared to him, and that he stood before her competent to judge of, bound to animadvert on, that which her pride would have concealed for ever.

"My Father! your return is most

welcome, most welcome will be your counsel!" she said in low but distinct accents.

"It shall be accorded, daughter," returned the Confessor, with his accustomed suavity.

"Strange and terrible events have overtaken me; Father, will they utterly crush me? Insupportable is the additional burden inflicted on me!"

"What be they?" said he, and a slight curve marked his smile; "what be they, and what be the sounds of mirth and revel which ring so discordantly in these walls, that should echo no voices but those of penitence, and sorrow, and woe? Is their heretic lord become also an infidel? Does he blaspheme God, that he dares thus hurl defiance towards Heaven? Even this is not wonderful; he who voluntarily throws himself into the vortex of apostacy, may be whirled

in its turbulent eddyings on the rocks of atheism !"

The Countess shuddered and crossed herself.

"Is it the residence of a lost daughter, whose very birth doomed her to perdition, that converts the fast into a jubilee?" continued the Confessor. "Then weep, daughter, and make intercession for the reprobate by groanings and tears! Unhappy offspring of an accursed union, whom every passing moment sinks deeper in the gulf of eternal anguish, thy laugh is more appalling than the yell of a fiend, than that yell which will be the only sound bursting from thy parched lips hereafter, mingled with execrations and curses on those whose headlong passions have destroyed thee everlastingly."

The drops of agony burst from every pore of the Countess, as she listened to

the terrible prophecies of the Confessor. She saw the lake of fire spread out before her, and the boiling of its waves, and the blazing foam of its shoreless sea; she heard the yell of ten thousand demons screaming an infernal pæan, as another soul was bound in adamantine chains on those sulphureous billows; and she saw that victim, her pallid face rendered more livid by the intense light of everlasting fires, dashed on the pitiless flood; her eyeballs blazing with the unquenchable flames, her fair skin melted away by the fervent heat, and eternally renewed, that it might eternally be destroyed. Then she heard the fiends rejoicing over another companion of their tortures,—those tortures which companion-ship cannot alleviate, their own malice at once increasing the punishment of their fellows, and their own; its gall at once overwhelming their victims, and themselves. She heard myriads of

voices bidding the sinking wretch curse those parents who had brought her into life only to render her a meet heir of eternal perdition. The appalling sounds that burst from the new inhabitant of hell, then smote the strained attention of the visionary, breaking forth in the low groan of desperate and inutterable woe; then rising into the shrilly scream that betokened a maddening brain, where madness never dwelt, because madness might induce oblivion of the past and cessation of pain in the present;—then the deep, prolonged curse to which the wretch had been tempted, was denounced by her against the authors of her doom; and then the burning sea blazed more furiously, and lashed in louder thunders against the rocks that were interspersed through it; each a teeming volcano pouring out a deluge of flame, whose lava mingled with the boiling waves; and every wave seemed to teem

with vitality, and to utter in thousands of tongues, in infinite variety of tones rising from mockery to sullen despair,—from malice to unimaginable agony, "Cursed be he that curseth father and mother!"

The groans that burst from the bosom of the Countess indicated the terrible direction in which her fancy had travelled. The Confessor, skilled to develope every intricacy of her mind, every turning of her thoughts, to gather as much from her silence as her words, understood the fearful impression his denunciations had made, and seized this moment to recur to the subject of Blanche.

"Even now the sound of revel grates on my ears," said he. "Whence doth it arise, and who are the partakers in pastimes so unseemly here? Belongs it to the strange and terrible events, my daughter, of which you spoke even now?"

"Father," returned, the Countess in

a voice hoarse from the agony she suffered, " behold my sin hath overtaken me, and that which I feared hath come upon me! They are going to marry Blanche Evelyn to one of the accursed, even to that arch-heretic, the young Lord of Leighton."

" Even so," replied the Confessor without surprise, " her marriage would be an event too advantageous to the interests of the damnable heresies which have gained so much ground in this country of Moab, to escape the policy of that foremost amongst the worshippers of Baal, Mark Russell. Daughter," he continued, and his manner acquired great energy, "this must be prevented! Already sufficiently guilty in having given birth to *one* heir of destruction, the vial of wrath would be emptied upon you, if more souls were to be brought into existence, and prepared for perdition by her who is unhappily your

child! The evil is mighty, and it threatens fearfully! Shall the fancy of a babe be permitted to frustrate the penance, and the anguish, and the bitterness of soul, with which, during so many years, you have endeavoured to wipe away the foul blot of your youthful transgression? Daughter, this must not be!"

"Avert it Heaven!" responded the Countess solemnly. "Father, is it in mortal power to ward off the blow?"

"Yea, my daughter," replied Valerius,—"even in your's and in mine, if we are content to use those means which are held out to us by Providence."

"Name them, Father, name them!" prayed Lady Arding, with energy. "Avert from me this terrible overflowing of the measure of iniquity. Let not my crime become deeper and

blacker,—sinking my body to the grave, and my soul to eternal death!"

"It rests even with yourself to sin more unpardonably, or by one deed to wash away entirely the transgression of your youth," replied Valerius, with solemnity. "It will be a deed of pain to yourself; but who can expect the path of life to be strewed with flowers? Surely not she who has trampled on the most sacred ordinances of religion! Who has sacrilegiously torn away the veil which enveloped her as the spouse of Christ! who has preferred the love of a mortal—nay, more, that of a reprobate man,—to the protection of an immortal God, and an everlasting Saviour! She has plunged the thorn into her own side, and she must pluck it out with pain! She has sown the wind, and she must reap the whirlwind! She has filled the cup of bitterness, and she must quaff

it! Her right eye has offended her,—she must pluck it out! Her right hand has offended her,—she must cut it off! She strives after eternal glory, and she must pay the price of its attainment!"

The Confessor had spoken with an overwhelming energy, that impressed every sentence he uttered on the soul of his penitent. She had regained her usual mood, and stood, with eyes uplifted, gazing on his countenance. When he had finished, she withdrew not that glance. Her figure was erect in its native majesty, and a deep hectic glowed on her cheek.—"What is the nature of the sacrifice now demanded of me, Father?" she asked. "Think you that I shall shrink from it? Is it more terrible than those already offered? Has *she* much more to yield, who has voluntarily separated herself from the beloved of her youth, so fondly beloved,

that she staked her soul's redemption for him ?—Who has submitted to meet him with looks averted—almost of abhorrence,—when her heart was scarcely large enough to contain the mighty tenderness it cherished for him ?—Who has allowed him to believe her alienated from him, at a moment when she would have stretched her body on the rack, if, after the torture had convulsed it, she might have gasped out the last sigh of departing life in his arms !—Who would have endured for him all, —every thing,—that included not in its event her eternal condemnation ? Oh, what is there yet left to *be* endured ? Is any task harder than that of exhibiting abhorrence to him whose happiness was dearer to me than life, even when I knew that his felicity was inseparable from his conviction of my love for him ? Aye, and I did love him ; Father, I love him still ! Witness,

Heaven, the terrible struggles that have distracted me, between the indulgence of those feelings which are the charm and the delight of existence, which I have, in some fearful moments, thought could not be unsanctified, they were so blessed!—and the remorse of violated vows, of a forsaken God, of a broken covenant, by which I exiled myself from the salvation pledged to all who partake of it! Father, should not this suffice? Father, are not these sufferings sufficient to purchase a Heaven which is to be won by them? But these are not all! Oh, Mother of God, didst not *thou* pity me, when my boy, my first-born, was torn from my bosom, even just when he had begun to twine himself round every fibre of my heart; almost to mingle with my very existence; the blessing, the pride, the enjoyment of his parents, the seal of union between them?

Aye, he was torn from me, and my eyes were opened, and the vision of my happiness had fled for ever! I felt that I was accursed, Father!" she continued with vehement agony; —"I felt it *here*, and *here*, in my heart, in my brain! The curse of fire was on me; it blazed in my head; it drank up the streams of my life-blood! Father, in that terrible hour, I was tempted to blaspheme and to die! But I lived over it! Even now, I live! Aye, I live to reject the embraces, the endearments of the sole remaining child of my bosom! I have repulsed her, Father, when she knelt to me for the blessing of a mother! I have shunned her sight, when her face—her father's softened image—would have brought more gladness to my heart, than the shining of the brightest sun that ever rejoiced the creation? I have worn an aspect of hate, when my heart

was dissolving in love and tenderness! Father, I tore myself from her arms, even when those of my husband—God pardon the sin, if it be a sin so to call him!—encircled us both, and drew us together, as if we should separate again, —never! And now, what more remains for me to do? What yet more terrible task is to be performed? Having done and suffered thus, should I not laugh to scorn all that torture can inflict? I dare the worst, I have already dared it! Speak, Father, even now whilst I have strength and sense to hear! God help me, for it seems to me that both will fail me!"

The head of Valerius was bowed down; the sudden illumination that had thus broken on that mind he had so long, and he believed so completely enthralled, astonished and disconcerted him. He dreaded lest the naturally vigorous intellect of the Lady of Ard-

ing should burst the fetters imposed on it by education, habit, and superstition. But his reverie was not of a minute's duration. His keen eye penetrated the course necessary to be pursued, and he commenced it instantly.

"Earthly affections will not entirely leave your heart, daughter, until the earthly tabernacle which is their natural abode, shall be dissolved," he said, in those soothing accents to which his voice was so admirably tuned. "You love your child; it is a sentiment implanted by God in the breast of her mother; and, if directed aright, it will lead both to Heaven. To ensure your daughter's salvation, you would sacrifice your dearest possessions; is it not so?"

"Father, they are already sacrificed!" returned the Countess with a smile of bitterness. "The love of my youth I have forsaken! The first-born of my

youth I have lost ! The second-born I have alienated ! The splendour of rank and the pomp of distinction which once possessed allurements so strong for me, I have been contented to abjure ! I have doffed the ermined robe of state, and have equipped myself in the solemn garb of penitence ! I have forsaken the Court in which I might have appeared with pre-eminent dignity, as the wife of its first Earl ! Neither was the sacrifice made when long habit might have satiated me with plenitude of enjoyment : it was demanded, and it was yielded, even when the prime of youth rendered me more susceptible of its delights. I abjured luxuries when they were but just tasted, and when they were most poignant. I relinquished those attachments which constituted the happiness of my existence, even when they were most dear to me ! Father, was I mistaken in supposing

that these would be an oblation acceptable to the Most High; the incense of which would continually rise up to Heaven, and ascend even to the Throne of Omnipotence? What more, then, is required of me? What more do I possess that can be offered? Have I aught that can purchase so vast a return as that which you proffer to me? Even the salvation of that soul which is dearer to me than my own!"

"Daughter," said Valerius, "you were the vowed bride of Heaven, and you divorced yourself from the spiritual bridegroom of your soul, to become the spouse of an earthly one! This would have been a grievous crime, even if he for whose sake you had committed it, had been a true son of the church; how much more grievous, then, since he is an arch enemy of it; an apostate from it; a rebel against God; an accursed

Achan, who has partaken of the spoils,—of spoils gathered from the spoliation of the sanctuaries of the servants of God,—of edifices appropriated to his worship! Bitterness, and desolation, and misery, were the natural results of an union formed in such direct defiance of God! Even from His innermost sanctuary were you torn,—even in the moment when you were devoting yourself to Him for ever! Saints, who were looking down from Heaven in attestation of the vow, how were ye confounded at the dire apostacy! How did ye turn away, and sigh over the increasing wickedness that blackened this earth,—the dwelling of man! What shall recompense a sin like this? Daughter, give a soul for a soul! Restore to Heaven the spouse of which you robbed it in your own person, by presenting to it her who is a fairer transcript of you, even your young and lovely Blanche!

Devote her to God, and secure, at the same time, her salvation and your own! Heed not her vain repinings after the pleasures of this life, which are verily like the transient glory that skirts the clouds when the sun is departing; it lingers; and even whilst the eye is fixed on it in fond admiration, it disappears, and all things are clad in the sober grayness of twilight! In a word —Lady of Arding, in my voice listen to the commands of Heaven! Surrender up your daughter to me! Consign her to me wholly! I will preserve her from this terrible union, which includes, in its results, the happiness of her whole life! I will place her in a sanctuary in which she shall be concealed from the view of all, but of that God to whom she will be devoted, and of those holy women, who will be at once her instructors and her examples! Place her where the salvation of her soul will be

secured ; where she will hear no lessons but those of holy piety, and true faith ! —where neither the cares of the world nor the deceitfulness of riches ever enter to choke the seed !—where she cannot apostatize, because she will hear no lessons of apostacy ; where her young and ductile mind will easily be led to comprehend the damnable errors of that heresy with which it has hitherto been poisoned ; where she will be gradually led to appreciate the beauties of true holiness ; and, in place of regretting those idle pomps and vanities which she was compulsively led to relinquish, she will bow down her heart in gratitude at the footstool of Him, whose ministers snatched her from the snare and the destruction—who rescued her soul from death, and her feet from falling !"

The Confessor paused. There was a silence of some minutes. Lady

Arding stood with her arms folded across her breast, her eyes fixed on Valerius, and her form proudly erect as when, clad in that ermined robe of which she had spoken, she stood the most lovely and distinguished of the dames of the British court. It seemed as if she were endeavouring to read in the countenance of Valerius, what he had not uttered,—as if she were endeavouring to obtain a clue to that labyrinth whose mazes she had never been able to develope.

"You would have me tear from the bosom of my Lord the last sweet flower he cherishes there," she said solemnly. "You would have me tread the most binding ties under-foot, and call the contempt of them, religion! You would have me purchase my salvation by draining, drop by drop, the blood of those I should cherish and protect. You would have me compel my peer-

less Blanche to the performance of that sacrifice at which my own heart revolted. You would have me tear her from him whom she loves, and give her a loathing, complaining, resisting victim to God! No—Father—no! If this be the price of my soul's redemption, I have not wherewith to purchase it! Blanche will marry, and she will believe herself sinless—happy in her ignorance! And me, cursed with knowledge—having plucked and eaten of that tree forbidden to me as to our first parents, having found it dust and ashes, let me bear the punishment of my transgression! Its weight is, indeed, heavy; its burden intolerable! Oh, bethink you, father, are there no other means by which it may be lightened? Shall my years of penitence and pain avail me nothing, because my soul rejects this last terrible penance! Think, Father—she is my child—mine only one—my last!

Where is my first-born? Father, have you not told me, that he is ripe for beatitude and eternity? Is not that sufficient? Will not his prayers obtain remission of sins for her who bore him, and who has since wept tears of blood for him? Is it nothing that *he is* dead to me? That I may never gladden my eyes with his sight? Must I lose this one also!"

"Yea, daughter," returned Valerius, with immoveable solemnity; "that you may merit the happiness of seeing that first-born, that saint worthy of the vocation whereunto he is called, deliver up the victim required of you, to that life here, which shall ensure her eternal happiness herafter."

"Never — Father — never! never! never!" returned the Lady, and she retired immediately.

It was midnight. The deep azure of

the sky, strengthened by thick black shadows veiling the stars at distances, and increasing the brilliance of those radiant intervals which were clear from clouds, was sometimes entirely overspread by the coruscations of the *Aurora Borealis*. Pale lightning occasionally trembled in the air, sweeping across the upper regions, like rays of reason dawning over a desolated mind, serving only to mark its desolation and its darkness more distinctly. These lights sometimes gleamed on the dilapidated fane of the monastery of De-lapray, glancing over its deserted chapel, where silence reigned at that hour when, formerly, numerous voices were accustomed to mingle with the notes of the pealing organ in praise and prayer to God. Some of the windows were entirely shattered,—some remained unbroken, and on these the lightning was reflected, and the moon-beams lingered.

Valerius stood opposite, on an eminence which commanded a view of the whole edifice. He recalled the days of pomp and power when he had held rule within its holy walls, and when its courts had resounded to the praises and humiliations of those whom the report of his high sanctity had brought thither. The *man* regretted the time of his influence and superiority; he sighed after that high distinction which had tracked his footsteps, when crowds thronged him, supplicating for his benison and his prayers. The ECCLESIASTIC mourned over that destruction of the religion to which he was so ardently devoted, typified by the desolation of one of its most celebrated seats. His courage was not depressed by the contemplation; his zeal after the restoration of the altars of *his* God was the more animated. He looked around him with an anxious eye. With that acuteness

of sense produced by intense anxiety, he distinguished the far-off footstep for which he listened. Presently his expected companion approached, and they recognized each other.

"My son!" said Valerius, bending low, and crossing his hands on the uncovered head of the youth who kneeled before him.

"Holy Father! even now the chimes warned me of the hour of meeting, even now it is midnight," responded the whispered voice of Lewen.

"I know it, my son! Rise and contemplate the scene before us with me."

Valerius bestowed on Lewen the benediction he coveted, who rose immediately after he had received it.

"Behold yonder edifice," said the Confessor, after they had stood some minutes, earnestly and in deep silence viewing it. "All is now dark and

silent as the grave, even at that hour when numerous voices formerly were wont to unite in glad hallelujahs to God, in hosannas to the Highest! How bitter the contrast! How deplorable the destruction in which every thing holy is involved in this unhallowed isle! It is the shipwreck of religion! It is the shore on which the vessel of our faith is stranded! The abominations of heresy are sanctified to men's minds by the speciousness of the new Belteshazzars, who take the sacred vessels of gold and silver from the Lord's House, and fill them with the unhallowed juice distilled from deadly herbs. From the prince to the peasant, all are up in arms against the Saviour of the world and his Vicar, to whom himself consigned the keys of Heaven. Very few are the men of power who have not been swayed by the delusions of Satan, or the interests of the world, to

forsake the faith sanctified by the testimony of ages, and to yield to the seductive novelty presented to them by the apostates from God! And their number diminishes daily!"

"And is it wonderful?" demanded Lewen, his countenance kindling as he spoke. "What equals their zeal, their importunity in season and out of season, their incessant watchfulness over the interests of their creed, their vehement urgings of men's consciences, their boldness of exhortation, their contempt of dangers, their contemning of the pains of the body, their earnest seekings to be admitted as worthy to set a seal to their faith, by obtaining the crown of martyrdom, their apparent sincerity, their unstudied eloquence appealing to the hearts and the understandings of all men, their talent in expounding texts of scripture, so unweariedly cultivated, so successfully

exerted? Pardon me, Father, if my aspirations after the universal empire of our holy mother church betray me into a warmth from which you would augur ill of my discretion. In *that* matter, let each day of my present life bear me blameless!"

"Restrain not your zeal, my son," returned Valerius; "it elevates my soul, and fills my heart with rapture. I hail it as the auspicious omen of the efficient aid your co-operation with our sacred cause will afford us. You were born to tread no obscure path; the pupil—the adopted son of Ignatius de Loyola, cannot be ignoble or undistinguished. I foresee, my son,—I foresee, with a prophetic eye, your zealous assistance always successful, our cause triumphing by it, our enemies humbled by it, the church blessing you, the elect of God numbering you amongst their most distinguished saints;

the rapture of your death-bed, your admission to Heaven, your canonization amongst men! These are a mighty recompense, and the price to be paid for them is great also!"

The countenance of Lewen was irradiated with the most brilliant enthusiasm as the Monk proceeded with his picture. No longer pale, no longer tranquil, his cheeks glowed with crimson animation; his eye sparkled with living fire, as all, which the proud and peculiar ambition of the recluse devoted to the Roman Church covets, was promised to him by Valerius.

"With the prospect of realizing this, oh, Father, what task would appear difficult, what enterprise impossible?" he said, and his tones expressed an intense capacity of feeling, of passion, perchance, that would have satisfied even the enthusiastic Page.—"To attain these, all my toils will be light.

What are the riches, and the pomp, and the power, of the world in comparison? Dust and ashes! Instruct me, teach me, direct me, my Father, what I must do, what I must perform, that I may work out for myself so great a portion of imperishable honour! Let my deeds be such that my name may shine from age to age, an example to the faithful, a memorial of what man may effect, when a holy zeal after religion sanctifies his efforts, and endows him with supernatural strength of intellect!"

The penetrating Valerius marked with an internal smile the mould in which the soul of his youthful companion was cast. He discerned its vast ambition; and he saw, through the veil in which the habits of his life had enwrapt it, that soul which, under other influence, would have aimed at the empire of states, and the universal vassalage of mankind. *Now*,

acted on by peculiar circumstances, it grasped those honours which he had been taught to consider as far outweighing the pomp and the power of the greatest potentate whose dominion was merely of this earth. The passion was the same; its direction was different. He cared little for dominion over the bodies of men. He sought to see their minds bow down before him, and he panted after a fame which he believed would be imperishable and immortal.

"Cherish thy holy zeal, my son," said Valerius, "and pursue the tract over which the lambent flame hovers, and which it demarcates. Bright is the path traced out for thee; brilliant and everlasting the goal at which it terminates! What sacrifice is too mighty to offer to the Divinity that presides at thy altars? Whether it shall command thee to continue in that

direction in which thou hast hitherto walked, or to swerve from it even to the very extremest points of contrast, I know there is that within thee which will forbid thee to hesitate, even though thou be required to immolate the cherished hopes, the imposing habits, of a life!"

"That is an immolation which will scarcely be required," replied Lewen. "From my birth I have been devoted to the service of God! Even in my boyhood I was wont to officiate at his altars! And the hope, the occupation of my youth is, to see those altars burning with incense over the whole earth! The unction of His Spirit be on me, the inspiration of His will be breathed into my soul! The unction *is* on me! The inspiration *is* breathed into my soul!" he continued, his countenance kindling with that celestial radiance resulting from

the purity of his zeal, pure as the angelic light, even though kindled by a false fire.—"Father, I may not doubt whither my onward path is to bend! The sword of the seraph has traced it out for me, and its tract is rendered visible by the bright flames that sparkle on it! Can this burning of my heart within me be a self-deception, my Father? No! it is the emanation of eternal truth!"

"My son," returned the Confessor, in his blandest accents, "the ardour with which we enter on a service acceptable to our inclinations, is too often mistaken by us for the infusion of the Celestial Spirit. Suppose I have discovered that you can advance the interests of the church ten thousand-fold more effectually by entering on the busy scenes of the world, by claiming those honours to which you were born,

than by devout meditations in a convent, aye, even if those meditations should eventually lead you to the triple crown! The influence of a powerful noble outweighs, in this Island, the most terrific denunciations that can be fulminated from the Papal chair. Terrible as it is, these heretic blasphemers—as surely lost as infidels—laugh the anathemas of our Holy Father to scorn! They serve them but for mirth! But the power of a high and wealthy noble has substantial influence; his name is a pledge for the justice of his faith, and thousands adopt it for his sake, as they would have followed his standard to earthly warfare, and have made that name their battle-word. What if thy vocation should seem to lie thus?"

"I would oppose to the measures dictated by worldly policy, the unerring

voice of conscience, the inspiration of the spirit within me!" replied Lewen, firmly and energetically.

"Wot you not," rejoined the Confessor, "that even now the event approaches which is to give the heretic heiress of these wide domains to an heretic husband? Wot you not of the hostility to our faith which, in process of time, will emanate from these walls, with more fatal zeal even than at present it emanates?—The Earl is quiet in his heresy. Content with his own convictions and those of his daughter, he puts not into action the almost unlimited influence his position gives! Yet see what even his name has wrought, inactive though he be! How then will the fatal delusion spread, when a young man, in the very prime of manhood, intemperate in headlong zeal, boiling with ungodly hatred against the true worshippers of Israel, shall preside here, and

add the power of Arding to that he already possesses? What can withstand such an union? The pillars of our church are already fallen, and its foundations will soon be rooted up. In that day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy, what will it avail, even though you, my son, preside on the throne of St. Peter? Your authority will be unvalued, your power contemned. You will see those altars defaced, which it is the hope of your life to rear even up to Heaven! Will you not then regret your blindness in preserving the path whither your inclination points, and in neglecting that whither duty directs you? What though it abounds with dangers and temptations? For the glory of God you throw yourself into the arena; you court wounds in your flesh, you triumph in the unspotted purity of your soul. You are called from the quiet seclusion of monastic

life, to enter into a conflict, the results of which will be most glorious to you. Arm yourself for it—dare it—commence it! Let your first victory be that which you will obtain over yourself in subduing the hopes of a life, hopes so much the more powerful, because they were sanctified by all that is holy and venerable in mortal institutions; because you regarded them as the inspiration of Heaven, as breathed by the voice of God! Estimate the recompense which will be yours through all eternity, by the extent of the sacrifice demanded of you. Be not deluded by your wishes; that will be the most acceptable service to the Most High, which most effectually promulgates His true worship. Believe, that, through me, the Spirit addresses you, rather than through your own heart! Let it now speak in thunder to you; let the flash of its lightning display to you

the circumstances which so peculiarly qualify you as an efficient supporter of the truth; behold your birth, your education, your principles so deeply rooted, your faith so immutably fixed! Why did Providence permit all these things to centre in you? Not that they might be useless, not that you might be inactive! My son, believe that Ignatius is now speaking to you; receive his sentiments from me; contemplate the picture as if he spread it out to you! Choose even at this moment whose you will be, and whom you will serve."

"My choice is made!" returned Lewen with solemn energy;—"Father, my choice is made! Not willingly do you delude me; you are yourself deluded. I am devoted to God; like Samuel, I was given to Him even in my birth. I am His minister, His priest,—I will never forsake my holy

calling. Even now, even now, Father, the Spirit burns within me, and encourages perseverance. It points out to me the inscrutable Providence of the Omnipotent,—it declares to me, that He sees not as man seeth,—that He works not as man worketh,—that He will choose His agents, His means, and His time, for the furtherance of those designs which are in His eternal mind. Why was I permitted to take His vows on me, only that they might be relinquished ? Why did I receive the benison of the holy Ignatius on my labours, if those labours are never to operate ? Was all this in vain ? Father, no ! My life is devoted to the church ; I will never forget that I am its vowed servant ! "

There was a pause. The eye of Valerius was fixed on the ruins before him. " The desolation of Jerusalem weighs down my soul," said he at

length. "Heavy and painful are the thoughts of my heart! Retire, my son! The hour is solemn, and the season—I would hold communion with my soul—I would meditate and pray."

Lewen, in silence, knelt to receive the benediction of Valerius; it was given to him, and he departed.

The Confessor was alone, and he *did* meditate; but his meditations were of a less hallowed nature than Lewen believed. He had suffered repulse in two points, on the final success of which, his heart was fixed; his *end* was, in part, a sanctified end, but his means were sometimes unhallowed.

We pursue him not in those meditations: they were interrupted by the approach of the Page.

The Confessor was startled at the appearance of the boy. "Ha!

thou here? And what hath brought thee? And wherefore comest thou?" said he.

"My Father," returned Altham, "*you* taught me that it was *he* over whom I was to watch; my *own* heart taught me to find bliss in my task! Know you not that I forget him never? That I see him always? At midnight as at noonday, my eye is on him; in all places, at all seasons, I am near him! I tracked his footsteps hither, and I followed him, unheard, unseen. Even now I saw him depart, and re-enter the castle. Father, he has been with you, he has conversed with you; and I come to discern here the traces of his having been."

"Fond and foolish child!" returned the Confessor; "beware, that thy much love worketh thee no woe! Forget not the end and the purpose of

thy pursuit of this youth ; look well to it, and prosper ! "

" Forget it, Father? Forget it?" returned the Page, and a scornful smile curled his lip. " Forget it ? Sooner may I cease to remember the existence of the sun, even when I am basking in his beams ! No, Father, I shall never forget it, for to that one centre all my hopes are bound ! "

" And do you gain on him smoothly, child ?" demanded Valerius ; " and are you imperceptibly winning from him every emotion of earthly feeling and of earthly tenderness of which that heart of his is susceptible ? Does he desire companionship with you ? Does he seek to unite you to him indissolubly ? Does he endeavour, by all means, to render your unavoidable separations less frequent and less prolonged ? "

" Father," replied the Page with a

smile which it would be difficult to analyze, for joy and bitterness seemed to struggle there. "I have won on him to care so much for my soul, that he believes it entirely surrendered up to him. He has singled me out as a fit subject for the disciplines, the privations, the apparel of a monastic life! He hath a strange envy to see this face bedecked with a cowl, and to submit this irregularly growing hair of mine to the clerical tonsure! What more would you desire, Father? He thinks me his convert; and will he not value the thing he has preserved? Doth not the meanest wretch a man hath saved from destruction, become valuable to him when he hath striven for his safety? Will not the holy Lewen love the novice whom he hath gained from the desert of the world? Oh, Father, will he not?"

"But his passions, his passions, can

you not touch the key-note of *them* ?"
demanded Valerius, impatiently.

" *Passions!* Father he is not a man of earthly passions, such as we possess! His passions are all of the same bent as the aspirings of his soul; they point Heaven-ward!"

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CHAPTER IX.

" How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven-down
Of darkness till it smiled !

I took it for a fairy vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' th' plighted clouds." *Comus.*

ON the following midnight Lewen again sought the scene of his conference with the Confessor, and he sought it by the appointment of Valerius.

It was very gloomy. Thick clouds scudded athwart the Heavens, blown

with a tempestuousness that rocked them like the billows of ocean. The rays of the stars pierced not through their murky veil, and the moon was buried in dusky shadow. A visionary mind might have imagined every heaving wave of the sky the car of a spirit; might have called the whole a celestial navy sailing through the ether, and exploring the worlds with which space teems. Lewen looked upwards, and the eye of his mind rested not on the blackening canopy above him; it pierced through it, and penetrated even to the splendour of the empyrean. In place of darkness and gloom, he saw the "Holy Jerusalem, descending out of "Heaven from God, having the glory "of God: and her light was like "unto a stone most precious, even like "a jasper stone, clear as crystal." He saw the burning of the twelve precious stones of the foundations of the

wall, all mingling their light, and pouring forth a dazzling effulgence and radiance. Lewen's soul was elevated to Heaven. His arms folded over his breast, seemed to exclude thence all thought of the world, its cares, its pursuits, its inhabitants. He trod in the star-paved courts of Heaven, and he drank ardour in his religion from the Fountain of Light. His whole heart was engrossed by a conviction of the sanctity of his vocation, of its immense importance to mankind, because it comprehended man's everlasting destiny. He anticipated the period when *his*—the true Church of Christ—should have universal dominion amongst men, and he gave his talents, his understanding to the pursuit. To assist the progress of that period, he had devoted his youth to the severest and incessant studies. He had kept the weary vigil, intensely

engaged in those avocations which were to enlarge his mind to its utmost capability of extension. He had travelled from convent to convent, seeking to acquire the abstruse points of learning from those who, at that period, almost engrossed it. He had used mortifications, abstinence, prayer, that he might be a meet vessel to receive the unction of the Spirit, and to enlighten mankind by his doctrines. All these had one object, the promulgation of that creed which he believed to be reared on the basis of eternal truth. At this moment, his soul was absorbed by intense devotion, by an unreserved surrendering of itself up to the Divine will. If mortal eye had then beheld him, he would have shone as a being of celestial mould, for the brightness of his countenance glowed with the splendour of immortality. He seemed a temple

worthy of the Divinity ; and the *halo* of eternal hopes shone as a glory around him.

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It seemed as if the unhallowed hands of those who had, with Vandal fury, torn down the sanctuary of the men devoted to God, had hesitated at the sacrilege of demolishing His temple. The chapel was not entirely despoiled. The altar piece and the decorations were torn away, but the altar itself stood, divested of its adornments. The white marble of its steps was discernible in the pale gleams of moonshine, which were gradually piercing the dun clouds, and streamed through the windows. Some of *these* were still entire, decorated with their gorgeous painted glass, that stained with its own hues the light it admitted. This was to be the scene of Lewen's conference with

Valerius, and he paused at the foot of the altar.

"Virgin—Mother of God!" he said, prostrating himself,—"Thou who art daily blasphemed by impious men,—whose temples they despoil,—whose worship they deride,—whose power they contemn,—whose mercies they reject—vouchsafe to enlighten me, and to penetrate my soul, that the light of thy truth may burn more brightly there, in contrast to the desolation and the darkness of this thy temple; where so many rapturous voices have mingled in anthems of thy praise,—where so many saints have gained an immortal crown,—where so many pious servants have departed from this life in the odour of sanctity, and have received the recompense of their reward in the life that is to come! Sanctify my efforts in thy service and to thy glory! Intercede for me with thine eternal Son, that he will

be pleased to pour out his spirit upon me,—to enlarge my faculties,—to extend my powers of endurance and of action,—to increase my talents, that I may the more successfully strive to restore those eternal truths, which the impiety of men seeks to efface from the tablets of human hearts! Oh, spirit of the most High, purify my lips with the fire that hallowed those of thy prophet, appointed to denounce thy judgments against a people rebellious as those, who now strive against thee! Permit nothing to issue from my mouth, that may militate, in the slightest degree, against the interests of thy church on earth! Give me courage to exhort, to perform, to reprove, to awaken, to convert! Let me be worthy of the vocation whereunto I am called, and suffer me never to forget, that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall

be revealed hereafter! Saints of God, ye who have lived in obedience to the precepts necessary to salvation, who have lost faith in a glorious certainty, and are now enjoying the beatitude of Heaven; ye, who have put off the garments of flesh, and now are arrayed in the bright and unchangeable vestments of eternity; ye who, instead of seeing your Saviour as through a glass, darkly, now behold him face to face; ye who dwell in that city 'wherein there is no 'temple, for the Lord God Almighty 'and the Lamb are the temple of it,' but who once worshipped here, and pressed, perchance, this earth on which I now prostrate myself; ye who have fought the good fight, and have kept the faith, and now possess that crown of righteousness laid up for you since the foundation of the world; ye who bring daily before the throne of God the prayers which His servants, yet on their earthly

pilgrimage, presume to offer to Him, and who add to them the purified supplication of your own hearts now wholly spiritualized; ye who have witnessed the demolition of your former sanctuary, and have heard the cry of those driven from their refuge, which has ascended to Heaven with the morning and evening incense,—oh, supplicate now for me,—oh, animate me with a portion of your divine spirit! Strengthen my weakness, prepare me for the conflict; bring to me spiritual weapons even from the armoury of God! Hover over me—protect me—aid me! Preserve me in the path in which ye have walked! Let me never lose sight of the star appointed as my beacon and my guide, in my journey through this desert of earth!"

He paused,—he bowed his face to the earth as if, like Moses, he felt that he was on holy ground. His spirit con-

tinued in prayer, but his lips moved not. There was a silence unbroken as the midnight darkness.

* * * * * * *

The strains that died away, and rose again, and again sunk into indistinct murmurs, were as the tones of celestial melody. Lewen, amazed, enwrapt, breathless, raised his head from the altar-steps on which it had been bowed in the fervency of his devotions. His eyes were thrown round as if he expected to *see the sounds themselves*,—his head bent forward,—his lips were parted; one knee rose from its prostrate position, and his foot firmly pressed the pavement; his hands rested on that upraised knee; then he gradually lifted himself from the ground, pausing in the act of doing so, even in motion preserving his attitude of deep attention; then he stood erect but no

form appeared in that darkness, whose *innate light* should disperse the gloom. Above, below, around, there was impenetrable shade. No waving of the light garments in which imagination might have decked the being from whom these sounds proceeded, was visible. It was a mass of unbroken darkness. It might typify that in which the awakened soul shall find itself involved, when it shall be roused to the realization of eternal hopes, by the melody of immortal choristers. The music swelled; it seemed to approach the very ear of Lewen. Then it receded gradually and he still followed, in the slow, listening pace of one who intrusts his safety through dark abysses to the guide whom he cannot perceive,—whose footfalls are at once his security and his conductors;—and it sported with him. Sometimes it seemed to ascend to the vaulted roofs above; then

it swept along the ground,—then it hovered midway in air,—then it appeared to breathe across his cheek,—then it audibly receded, and he constantly pursued it; attentive only to that, he marked not the windings of his progress, or the intricacy of his path.

* * * * * * *

The light was resplendent. And to him on whom it had suddenly burst, after so long a sojourn in darkness, it was dazzling, and of more than mortal effulgence. Innumerable tapers were reflected and multiplied by the massy silver candelabràs, that glittered with diamond brightness, and, by their skilful disposition, arched into a many-coloured Iris. There was no shadow—there was no distance—there was a blaze of light; the very air seemed to be illuminated; all things there appeared as if *touched with light.* There was no re-

moteness; the splendor beaming every where, seemed to constitute the whole space *a centre.* There was no diverging of rays; all was radiant; and the light was distinctly coloured. It was refracted by pendants of crimson, and the vaulted ceiling was studded with the refractions, deepening on its glowing ground, like meteors in a sky of lightnings; seeming only points of collected fire, of that fire which, dispersed, was so orient. The whole atmosphere was of that mellow brilliant hue, in which the angelic hosts may float—which they may respire,—which may give to them the celestial glow of their beauty,—which may impart more vivid and delicate colours than the sun ever bestowed on things of this world, than the prism ever reflected.

Lewen was drawn by the sweetness of the invisible musician into the very centre of the apartment. He paused—

he looked around him, and the sound ceased.

It seemed as if they by whose influence he was now acting, whether they were spiritual essences, or of the grosser mould of mortals, engrossed one sense, pouring pleasure on it to its utmost capacity of enjoyment, and then entirely ceasing to affect it, employed all their power in intoxicating another. There was nothing to distract Lewen's attention from the scene before him. The delicious harmony which had stolen on his ear in the darkness, was heard no longer, now that he was surrounded by the blaze of that marvellous light. His whole faculties seemed to be wrought up to the point of sight, that his mind might receive the impression made on it through that organ.

The light itself appealed to every power of the imagination, awaking it to action, delighting, dazzling, but not op-

pressing it; and the objects revealed by that light, strengthened the impression itself had made.

It was a saloon of some extent, lofty, and the roof arching into a dome. The pavement was of marble, black and white squares continually alternating. The walls were adorned with *paintings*, not the clumsy efforts of some vulgar artist employed to perpetuate the undistinguished resemblance of those whom their accidental position in the world alone ennobled; but such as gained admiration from the practised eye of Lewen. He had been accustomed to the exercise of talent buried in the seclusion of a convent, which had displayed itself in undertaking works, that should adorn the temple dedicated to religion. His travels, whilst he had sought to enlarge his mind by them in more important matters, had cultivated his taste by continually affording op-

portunity of viewing the chef-d'-œuvres of art, with which, near this æra, the world was dazzled. He had adored the genius of Raphael d'Urbino, displayed in the cartoons which were the astonishment of Europe. He had seen, known, conversed with Michael Angelo Buonaroti, in the palace of De Medicis. Correggio, Daniel de Voltera, Giorgioni, Holben, Julio Romano, Paul Veronese just commencing his career, Tadec Zuccre, and Albert Durer, were known to him either personally or by their works. But he was far from the seat of their fame; far beyond the system enlightened by their sun. And yet here were copies of their celebrated works, so exquisite, that but for the invincible sameness of style pervading the small collection, they might have deserved the admiration of originals. They were the most impassioned subjects of each artist. At another time

Lewen would have turned from them disgusted, dismayed, or indifferent. But he had been prepared to receive the display of them by the skilful regimen under which his feelings had been placed: his fancy wandered as he gazed on them; his heart throbbed with other sentiments than those of ardent devotion. His nerves were irritated, his blood was in tumults, his brain burning. The music had softened every sterner feeling of the severe votary, the self-denying, self-torturing anchorite; it had assailed the senses of the man, and had rendered him purely mortal. Then he had been suddenly ushered into this scene of brilliance, from the midst of impenetrable darkness. At first his heart had sickened at the instantancous burst of light; afterwards it had been enlivened and enraptured by the mellowness of the atmosphere diffused around, and the glowing streaks

of crimson light shining on the walls, and the roof, and the pavement, like flakes of fire. Then the luxuriant specimens of that art, which had been so much the passion of his soul, that he had compulsively stifled his talents, lest they should tempt him to over-value them, to neglect for them the service of his Master, had inflamed his imagination, and dispersed the cool gravity of his judgment. He lingered over each beauteous feature that glowed on the canvass, with warmer feelings than living beauty had ever inspired, even in its fairest guise. The hue of the light by which they were displayed, had mellowed the cold hue of lifeless portraiture to the warm glow of vitality. They seemed to respire,—to live. Their eyes were fixed on Lewen, and he returned the glance as he would that of a living creature. The illusion was complete. The lips of the gazer opened,—

he would have spoken, but the delirious throbbings of his heart checked his efforts.

* * * * * * *

It was a form as of the spirit of light that stood before Lewen; so shadowy, so soft, so bright, its essence seemed but *light embodied.* The drapery which flowed around it, was of snowy whiteness, sweeping in graceful folds on the pavement; and the slight waist was encircled by an azure zone, clasped with a brilliant crescent, that sparkled dazzlingly in the glowing atmosphere. The exquisite neck and arms were uncovered, except by a novice-like veil, whose full drapery wove around them. The fairy feet were sandalled with silk of blue embroidery, and they scarcely appeared to press the earth they condescended to touch. The delicate head of a supernatural beauty was covered

with soft, wavy, golden curls, through which the radiant eyes shone like gems set in the precious metal. A colour, as of *celestial roses*, glowed on the cheek, completing the perfection of consummate loveliness. Lewen saw no longer the inanimate forms on which he had pondered; he was no longer deluded into a belief of their existence. The *being* standing before him engrossed his faculties, strained admiration to its utmost pitch, increased the throbbing of his heart, and kindled a fire in every vein. He thought that Heaven had, at length, opened to his prayers, and had sent down to him one of its celestial missionaries to impart to him its will.



Lewen felt the touch of the soft white hand gently passed over his temples, and he trembled beneath the pressure.

He looked up, and met those brilliant eyes fixed on him. A recollection, as the dim memory of a long past vision, rushed upon his mind; but it was indistinct and impalpable. It was not the countenance of a stranger that now beamed on him, neither was it one which frequent intercourse had rendered familiar. Perhaps, in his dreams of Heaven, the enthusiast had seen forms like these, and had called them *blessed*. Perhaps, he had permitted his imagination constantly to recur to them, and had, by this means, rendered the impression more vivid.

" Rise, and kneel not to me—bend not before me!" said the form, and Lewen felt there was more harmony in the soft subdued sounds that breathed from those parted, rosy lips, than in that music which had conducted him hither, a meet harbinger of his celestial visitant. " I am a mortal even as thou

art! I am more bound to this lower world than thyself, for I am manacled by passions and sentiments that thou wottest not of! Rise, oh rise! Are not these mortal sounds, are they not mortal words? Are they not mortal feelings that struggle *here*, that torture the pent-up trembler within? Behold, is not this the breathing of a mortal, is not this *mortal terror*? Thinkest thou, that higher spirits are harrowed by agony such as mine? Look on me! Read in my appearance the evidence of my fellowship with thee and with humanity, the stamp of *mortal woe!*"

Lewen saw, felt, knew, that the being before him was, indeed, *human*—was a *woman!* But he rose not from his reverent attitude: he gazed on her with feelings of more profound humility than those which had, at first, bowed him prostrate before her.

"Rise, rise!" she continued, her

features strongly marked by the agony of which she had spoken; "or behold *me* in an attitude better suited to me than, to thyself! Wilt *thou* bow to mortal, who art vowed to the immortal? Wilt *thou* prostrate thyself to the creature who art devoted eternally to the Creator? Hast thou not renounced all those passions which convert earth into elysium or hell, and yet dost thou bend *thus* under their influence? Act according to that vocation whereunto thou hast bound thyself, and admit not within thy heart those rapturous charities of life from which thou hast exiled thyself for ever!"

She laid her hand on his shoulder with an expression that seemed to pourtray that sentiment *since* arranged thus, "*Now, Infidel, I have thee on the hip!*"

Lewen raised his head, but he did not rise from his posture of humiliation.

He seemed transfixed to the earth by a fascination, whose influence he could not resist. Feelings, which had never before agitated him, the existence of which he had hardly suspected, now reigned the more despotically and tumultuously from their former suppression. And yet they appeared not strange to their prey. He felt as if they were thoughts that had formerly been dispersed in his mind, now collected to one point; as if he had suddenly defined the form and features of a phantom who had hitherto pursued him, and whose lineaments he had been unable to discover; he found them novel, but not undelightful; and yet, though no longer shapeless, he knew not in what species to class them. He gazed on the face of cherub loveliness that beamed over him, as the pilgrim, who has wandered through the dreary night, gazes on the rising sun that is to display creation,

with its infinite wonders, to his view. It seemed as if he expected from that youthful being to be initiated into the knowledge of things beyond mortal ken. He confounded a spiritual with a mortal being, and he assigned to the fair thing before him the loveliest and the most benignant attributes of both. He felt the pressure of the hand, and he knew that it was of corporeal substance. He saw the glancing lightnings of the eye, and he believed them the emanations of angelic light. The soft and shadowy form seemed to attenuate under his eye, and imagination panted, lest, in the next moment, it should mingle with the bright halo of light around it,—of that light which seemed to be the pervading principle of its formation. He felt, that his posture to aught of mortal nature and of merely worldly functions was unseemly, but he could not rise from it,—he could not disavow the mingled sentiments of

reverence, of admiration, of enthusiasm, which occupied him, by an attitude less expressive of homage. Never before had his feelings been so deeply affected by the touch of earthly passion; never had his brain been so bewildered; never had his heart throbbed so tempestuously. There was fire in every vein, and it shone in the burning hectic of his cheek, in the luminous brilliance of his eye, in the tumultuous heavings of his form. The countenance of the being who gazed on him, became rapturously elevated as the perturbation of Lewen's mind was gradually more apparent. An air of triumph diffused unimaginable splendor over the glowing colours of her celestial beauty. It seemed to raise her above the earth, and it stamped her with the characteristics which imagination loves to ascribe to the guardian angel that has saved the soul he was appointed to guard.

"Pupil of Ignatius, devout converter of thousands of souls, reclaimer of myriads more, why kneelest thou thus to me, who am a being like unto thyself, but with more of this earth in my mould, seeing that there exist within me passions of which thou knowest nothing?" she said. "Come, recal the vocation to which thou hast devoted thyself. In childhood thy pleasures were limited by the inclosure of a monastic garden, and were contained, for the most part, within a missal and a breviary. The baubles to amuse thy infantile fancy, were the rosary of a pious monk, perhaps a crucifix, or, perchance, the dead man's skull which recalled to thy instructors godly thoughts of their own fleetingness, of their own short span of life. And then thy studies, what were they? Thy mind, methinks, was plunged into the midst of hideous contemplations and gloomy terrors.

The rack, and the torture, and the fire, and those pains to which every element is made to subserve and contribute, were displayed to thee. Their form was impressed on thy soul, on that soul which was moulded to bigotry, and darkness, and apathy, by them. And then what was the plan of thy travels? From convent to convent were thy steps bent, and to what purpose? To find the last they quitted, the prototype of the next they entered! For there was the same dull routine of formal devotion in all; the hour prescribed in which prayer is to be offered to Heaven, by no means to be neglected, let the heart be wandering when it may. The lips must pronounce the sentence dictated by the formulary, even if the soul be darting, with winged speed, through the vastness of space, and culling thence all that can most delight its peculiar passions; aye, *passions*, monk! and call

them by what name you will, even *passions* inhabit beneath the cowl and the scapular. And *now* search thy own heart, and mark what is the end for which thou art called hither! At whose summons didst thou come? From whom didst thou receive thy instructions? By whom art thou conducted even now? Mark me, by one whose will must be thy law! To whom thou must bow both inclination and feeling,, and even principle! Have they of thy creed,—hast *thou*, any principle, any conscience, but such as exists at the bidding of thy spiritual director? Is it not he who is to mould both aright? Canst *thou* presume to choose the evil and to eschew the good but at his bidding? Is he not the lord of thy body and thy soul? Does not his domination encompass thee here,—continue even in the grave? For, what is thy chance of canonization, young zealous saint! if *he* forbid it? Does it not pene-

trate even beyond the last sanctuary of mortal man, to the empyrean? Does not he engross the power of giving thee a passport into the realms above? Does not he arrogate to himself the privilege of unbarring the portals of eternal life, by muttering over thee the mystical *te absolvo?* Is it not even so?"

She paused, and Lewen arose.

The tumult of his feelings had increased whilst she spoke. The infinite variety of her voice, modulated to every cadence of tenderness, compassion, indignation, scorn, gave energy to each sentence, emphasis to each word. The sounds sunk on the soul of Lewen. The sentiments which at another time would have inspired only horror, now appeared fraught with truth, and smote coldly on his heart. They removed only the *awe* which the *awfulness* of youthful beauty had at first infused into him. He saw a woman only, but beau-

tiful beyond imagination; a creature of impulse, whose every-look awaked a passion, whose every glance was echoed by a throb. It seemed to Lewen as if, until this moment, he had not lived. Existence lost, in his view, the vapid sobriety of its colouring, and glowed with all the splendor that the sentiments, which he was insensibly imbibing, bestow on it. He stood erect, but submissive; he had exchanged the humility of the devotee, for the trembling of the *lover*. Yes! this was the moment in which all the feelings of Lewen's soul were roused into tumultuous and unquiet existence.

Since his residence in the castle of Arding, it seemed that he had been conducted through all the initiatory stages of passion. The constant society of the young and impassioned Page; his own predilection for that society, all uncertain as was the pleasure the

petulant boy would choose to bestow,—a predilection of a nature so different from any of which he had formerly been susceptible, had powerfully operated on his mind, even though their progress had been imperceptible. The world had been presented to him under an aspect widely different from that in which he had hitherto viewed it, diametrically opposite to that in which his imagination had pictured it. And then, on this eventful night, his senses had been all taken captive by the infinite power of the diverse enchantments spread over him. The music *touching his soul beyond all else, because he loved it much*, streaming in the midst of darkness and desolation, seeming to rise from the very ruins of that temple, of that altar, at which he had prostrated himself, borrowing additional charms from the scene and the circumstances in which it breathed his delicious poison around him; then the

exquisite paintings speaking to the passions, and exciting them to such turbulence, that reason and judgment, if not destroyed, were, at least, silenced; then the glow of the light combining with the objects it illuminated, to seduce and soften; and lastly the sudden appearance of the radiant being who stood before him in the splendor of perfect beauty, all glowing with life, and animation, and feeling, adorable in his first impression of her nature *as a spirit*, clad in charms ten thousand fold dearer *as a woman*, had perfected those feelings to which previous objects had given birth and nurture.

Lewen loved.

That powerful sensibility which nature had bestowed on him, the fatal gift of feeling in its utmost extent, which had hitherto been absorbed in acquired sentiments, animating the ardour of his religion, strengthening his zeal, was now

suddenly thrown into its natural direction, and threatened, in the impetuosity of its current, to devastate, instead of fertilizing, the regions through which it passed. Overwhelmed by its force, he now stood in the presence of her who had transformed him, unable to speak but not confused, agitated but not embarrassed, pained yet delighted.

"And whither points thy ambition?" she resumed, after a long pause; "is it even that thou mayest be such as they who now have the dominion over thee? Oh, bethink thee, what are they? Is it for the sleepiness and the drowsiness of a life like theirs, that thy feelings—thy capacities—thy aspirings after all that is mighty and vast, were given to thee? Even if success attend thy steps, even if thy eloquence shall allure all men to thy creed, what will be thy own fate? Inertion, inactivity,—perchance inanity! The toll of the monastic bell will be all

that will recall thee to a sense of existence; there will be the daily prayer—the daily mass,—the duty of the confessional, and all is done! And what does the rest present, these over? The dull, heavy sleep that succeeds fatigue! Wander from cell to cell, from brother to brother; hear the complaints of one, the coldness of another, the visionary ecstasies of a third, the gloomy bigotry of a fourth! Is it for such as these that thou hast toiled, and rejected the sweets of reciprocal sentiments and mutual kindness?—Hast thou endeavoured to allure victims to sacrifice themselves on such an altar? And haply hast thou succeeded? How then? Oh, when the sigh of regret burst from them, and the groan of despondence, or the bitter sarcasm of doubt, will not thine ear be appalled as conviction of the fruitlessness of thy work impresses thy mind? Wilt not *thou* also become gloomy—

desponding—despairing?—How vapid the picture! how colourless the prospect! Compare such a future with the present *now*!"

"Now?" exclaimed Lewen, and the cheek of his companion paled beneath the intense flashing of his eye, and then glowed again more brightly than before; "*now*? Life has no future moments to bestow, such as this! Canst thou promise to me a repetition of these feelings, these ecstacies? Beautiful being! what name shall I give to thee? how shall I call thee? *Angel?* Methinks I would not have thee *Angel*, whilst I am yet mortal, unless, indeed, thou wouldst be my guardian spirit, hovering continually around me, whether in the world or in the convent! With thee, indeed, in thy society, the existence which thou hast pictured, would lose its vapidness. Secure of thee, what cares could distract my mind, what gloominess could

oppress my soul, what coldness could deaden my zeal? With thee, my companion, my guide, my friend, should I not see brightness on all sides? Should I not find bliss every where? Beautiful being! whom to possess would recompense the surrendering up of myself entirely to thee!"

The triumph of her smile was more brilliant than before. "Well should we be mated!" she said. "And whether the fanatic converted the sceptic, or the sceptic the fanatic, what matter, so that there *was* conversion? And what hast thou to bestow that should allure me to dwell with thee for ever? Would thy coldness and apathy, thy indifference to aught this world can afford, and thy proud contumely of passion, be accepted as an equivalent for the prodigality of passionate tenderness, which will be lavished by me on him to whom I shall devote myself? Con-

sider—wouldst thou not gainsay the sentiment which forms—which *is*—my whole soul, my whole being, intense, absorbing love, even when it was poured out on thee? Wouldst thou not reprove my adoration of mortal man, and, conducting me to the foot of the altar, bid me prostrate myself there in prayer and penance, and bid my soul ascend to Heaven, even although it was imprisoned to earth only by the fetters which linked it to thee? And if the burning words of passion that scorched thy ears, were mingled with the doubts of infidelity, wouldst thou not recall the oaths which had bound thee to deliver up such a blasphemer against thy creed to the power of the secular arm? and wouldst not thou thyself bind this body to the flames, since, by so doing, thou wouldst, beyond contradiction, prove thy zeal in the service of holy mother

church, and thy claim to the crown of a saint ?"

Lewen spoke not. His vows—his vocation—were recalled to him, and were set in appalling array before his mind. But the terrors of their violation had been swallowed up by the bitterness of feeling with which he had listened to the last demand. He cast on her a look of grief, of indignation, of supplication, but he was silent, with his eyes still fixed on her.

She met his glance, and whilst she detained it, she receded. Absorbed—fascinated—whilst her form still remained present, he had no fear of losing sight of it, and he perceived not that she was about to depart. Already she touched the threshold—she waved her hand. Aroused to consciousness by this action, he darted forward. In an instant, he was at her feet, and he grasped her drapery.

"Leave me not, oh leave me not!" he exclaimed, in accents too impassioned to permit apathy to be charged on him with justice. "Above all, leave me not *thus!* Why have you risen on my view, like a beautiful shade, delighting me in the visions of the night-season, if it be only to disappear? Why have you delighted and dazzled only to bewilder? Why have you awakened new hopes—new fears—new desires—new dreams of bliss—if it be only to delude? Why do I see in thy face all that is lovely and graceful in benevolence, and mercy, and benignity, if it be only the veil to cover a heart hard as stone, of cruelty, that taketh pleasure in causing misery? Oh, depart not! Remain, that I may gaze on thee! Remain, if it be but to torture, as already thou *hast* tortured! Remain, although each word shall hurl a brand of fire in my heart! Remain,

although it be to my destruction! To gaze on thee thus—to be near thee thus—to await in patient expectation for one word from thee,—to treasure that word, all-bitter though it may be,—to love thee in thy scorn,—to adore thee in thy indignation,—behold, I ask but for these! Allay the feelings thou hast excited! Darest thou *thus* quit the being in whom thou alone hadst power to raise emotions such as these? Thou canst not!"

She looked down upon him, and emotions powerful as those of which he had spoken, burned in the brightness of her eye.—"We must part," she said, "we must part even now! But we shall meet again! Ask not—question not. How we have already met, thou knowest not; believe then, that, although still thou knowest not either the manner or the season, we *shall* meet again! Forget me not!" she con-

tinued, and the triumph of her smile indicated how much she defied all efforts at forgetfulness: "I am to be purchased: bethink you whether there be a price which you will not give for my attainment. Trust me, we shall be again together in an hour and a day that thou thinkest not of; prepare thyself for our meeting, and prepare to abide by the issue of it!"

They were beyond the threshold. In an instant all light was shut out. Lewen no longer saw the incomprehensible being that had so powerfully affected the last moments of his existence. There was impenetrable darkness, and he felt that she was no longer near him. The wind blew cold and chill through the broken roof, above which the stars were shining. Lewen made them his guide, and in a few minutes he was in the open air.

CHAPTER X.

"Hold thy peace, thy scurrility! shut up thy mouth, thy profession is damnable, and in pleading for it thou dost plead to Baal. I have long opened my mouth wide, and gaped, I have gaped as the oyster for the tide, after thy destruction . but cannot compass it by suit or dispute; so that I look for a bickering, ere long, and then a battle."

Ben Jonson.

"Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun: it shines every where." *Shakspeare.*

"Thou know'st no less, but all: I have unclasp'd
To thee the book even of my secret soul." *Ibid.*

LEWIS'S mind was indescribably agitated, and the change his sentiments had undergone, was indicated by the perfect silence he preserved towards

Valerius, on the subject of his last night's adventures.

Neither did the Confessor annoy him with demands difficult to be resolved or evaded. He contented himself with observing in silence. He threw himself frequently in Lewen's path; he even conversed with him, but he alluded not to the scene of last night, except by assigning as his reason for the non-fulfilment of his appointment, the indisposition of Lady Arding. The presence of Valerius was irksome to Lewen. He was suffering under the pain of incessant struggles between principle and passion, between the confirmed habits of a superstitious mind, and the newly-admitted interests of a feeling forbidden to him. He walked—he desired solitude. The duties incident to his office were performed with a perturbation and an impatience diametrically opposite to his general calmness and quietude. The

attentive and observant Russell marked the change, but he did not comment on it. He silently observed every various shade of Lewen's countenance, and he was intent on developing the cause. In the mean time, Lewen, immersed in profound abstraction from the present, continually, and every moment, recalling, dwelling on, the scene of last night, became as decidedly distracted and alienated, as he had formerly been collected, and devoted to the occupation of the passing hour. He quitted the presence of the Earl and his Chaplain as soon as he could in decency, and he went to his own apartment. But it seemed to him that he could not breathe freely within its narrow circumference, that the thoughts with which his heart expanded, were checked and pent up there. He quitted it, and went into the open air. Beneath the vaulted canopy of Heaven, his heart throbbed as violently

as it would, and he strove not to check its pulsation ; his imagination expatiated as freely, and he desired not to clip its wing, to tame it to the level walk of judgment and reason. The sounds of the melody of the invisible musician of the last night, still echoed in his ears. In every object around him he recognised something which, either by the force of resemblance or contrast, recalled to him, in all her vivid brightness of colouring, the beautiful being who had so powerfully impressed him. He heard the delicious tones of her voice, but the utmost exertion of fancy could not modulate them to any appropriate sentiment. Then when he found his powerlessness in this point, he felt, that she had been mysterious and unintelligible,—that whilst she had intoxicated his imagination and stamped herself on his heart, she had not permitted his judgment to be called into

exercise on her even for a moment. The utter revolution which had been effected in his character, could not occur to him without many struggles, bitter and violent. His vows which he had formerly recalled with pride and exultation, now appalled him. His heart, hitherto entirely devoted to the service of his religion, now bowed before a woman,—an unknown being,—perhaps an unholy one,—and even if pure as a seraph, forbidden to him, "*vowed a Nazarite to the Lord.*" The thought fired his brain, and tortured him almost beyond sufferance. He endeavoured entirely to exclude it, and to dwell on her so beautiful and so incomprehensible. But the *avenging fiend* spoke from within, and spoke incessantly. Its voice seemed like the echoes of thunder,—*as the voice of the angel of God.* Never before had Lewen felt the remorse originating from com-

mitted sin; never before had he suffered under the bitterness of guilt.

Lewen's meditations had imperceptibly led him into the midst of an open area, in which were the Page and Shirley the Steward, with various other members of the household.

A mark was fixed on a tree in the centre of the area, which was evidently a point to be aimed at by those who chose to essay their skill in archery. Several arrows sticking in various directions, above, below, and in all sides of the central point, indicated the numerous efforts that had, without success, been made by the by-standers. Shirley, with an inflamed face, resulting from the combined causes of native colour, wine, exercise, and the heat of the day, stood close to the Page in vehement and angry discussion on some matter in dispute between them. Altham listened to his complaints and abuse

with an air of easy impertinence,—sometimes replying,—sometimes remarking on the good qualities of his bow, the string of which he was attentively examining. As Lewen approached, the disputants both turned to him.

Well met, Master Lewen!" began Shirley. "The weather and the exercise together are almost too much for a moderate man, and I do confess, that they incline me to wish there were really any virtue in the bell of St. Guthlac, or the Felt of St. Thomas of Lancaster, that I might, peradventure, lose this head-ache which now tormenteth me!"

"Thou a moderate man!" said the Page with a sneer. "I would compound *two* moderate men with thy materials. And for thy head-ache, in sooth I marvel not that thou criest out upon it, for if thy brawling hath sounded to thy own

ears as discordantly as it hath done to mine, thou wouldst doubtless pray for the boots of the Saint of Canterbury, whom men call by the same name as him of the Felt, that thou mightest escape out of the hearing of thyself."

"I would, thou saucy Page, that *thine* ears were even as the ear of Malchus," retorted the angry Steward; "and verily if the sword of Peter were mine, I would apply it with right good will on a similar operation."

"I doubt thee nothing," returned the Page calmly. "But, good Master Seneschal, thy sword hath rested so long in its scabbard, that I query much whether there be not an adhesion which will be invincible by thy utmost skill, and will cost thee as much pain and heat as thy clumsy efforts at dexterity have done even now. Compete only with those of thy own bulk, good Master

Steward, and when thou hast a mind to success, enter not the lists against Philip Altham."

"Against *thee*, thou thing of shreds and patches!" said the Steward, waxing warmer and warmer, "thee who, stript of thy finery with which my Lady dizens thy outward appearance, caring little for thy inner man, resemblest the pretended miraculous image of our Lady of Worcester, which, deprived of some half dozen veils and dressings, appeared but the wooden resemblance of a wooden-pated fellow of a bishop. Thy vaunted skill in archery appears right well, seeing that the cord of thy bow broke at the first pull, whereas my arrow, if it entered not within the circumference of yon circle, at least fell not beside the tree, but struck in the trunk of it, as may be seen even at this moment."

"Truly that *is* a feat to vaunt!" said the Page with a sneer. "It would have

gone hard with any but a blind man, to have shot beside a trunk that might have burned Friar Forrest over again, or might have been carved into an image of thy own size."

"Thou art a most discourteous Page," returned the Steward irefully, "and disgracest that society of well-mannered imps by calling thyself after their name. Thou art made up entirely of frolic and mischief and evil devices against those whom thy irreverent tongue continually attacks. Thou payest no respect to persons; and whether it be the Steward or the Suttler, the well-approved domestic of the Earl of Arding, or the newly-arrived hireling, all are to thee subjects of scorn and derision. Even now, when the noble Lord Leighton, that shall shortly be the husband of the Lady Blanche Evelyn, stood by thy side watching the sports, I marked thy eye glancing at him in a manner little beseeming

thee, who art but the beggarly varlet of my Lady, unfathered and unknown."

"Such a reproach cometh well from thee, old man," returned the Page, crimsoning with mingled feelings, "whose fathers have been the serfs and the hinds of the Earls of Arding, till in thy precious person their name was tacked to the appendages of a silver chain and a bunch of keys, of size well assimilating to thy own ponderous bulk. For my eyes, I use them as I will, whether I choose to employ them in observation of the young Lord Leighton, or of the basest clown in my Lord's stables. And for that young Lord, be he of blood as pure and of hopes as high as he may be, I hold myself not worse than he. My ambition has started as high a quarry as his, and my ability may perchance attain it. *Finis coronat opus*, if thou knowest so much latin; and if thou dost not, thou mayst get it done for

thee, and a comment thrown into the bargain, by thy pious friend, my Lord's Chaplain, even for the asking."

"Sirrah, be more mannerly, and speak of thy superiors with the respect they deserve from thee," replied the Steward, becoming more arrogant as the perturbation of the Page became more perceptible. "It becometh not thee to cavil and doubt my knowledge of the latin tongue, seeing that I partook of the studies of my Lord, who applied himself to them at those seasons when other young nobles were hawking and hunting and jousting: not that he,—my Lord, I mean—was a whit behind them in excellence at all manly pastimes, but he followed them at intervals of leisure, and made higher game the object of his serious thoughts."

"Videlicet—the forcing away a novice at the moment of profession," said the Page maliciously.

"Thou art sunk in the bottomless

pit of effrontery and vileness, thou Page of the Devil," returned the Steward, foaming with indignation. "If thou wert to perform over again the worst action of my Lord's life, it would be the best of thine, and might be boasted of by thee as redeeming a thousand vile ones of thy own invention. Rail not against him whose bread thou eatest, and whose hand clotheth thee. Restrain thy profane tongue, lest ill come to thee, such an ill as thy dismissal from the walls which have too long sheltered such a vagabond as thou."

"Old man, I defy thy vengeance, and I despise thy malice," returned the Page laughing insolently. "I know well that if it had rested with thee, my dismissal from these walls which have so long sheltered me, would have occurred before I had owed them much gratitude for their protection. Without any thanks to thee or thy good wishes, I remain

here still, and am likely to remain here, perchance, long after thou hast quitted it for another habitation, where, at least, thou wilt be silent, and canst not expect the preferment to the Stewardship of so grand a master as thy next Lord may be. By my halidame, the worms will have a dainty meal!"

"Thou art the worst amongst the sons of Belial," retorted the Steward. who by no means relished so decided an opinion of the near approach of his departure from that world, the good things of which he loved from his soul. "Thy jests are profaneness, and thy wit impiety. Both the one and the other is so common, that even mine host of the Maple-bowl cracks it on every yeoman and hind, that takes up a night's lodging with him."

"By this time, then, thou shouldst be well accustomed to it," returned the Page, "and shouldst no longer feel

its bitterness. I marvel much that thou (who art in the practice of drawing profit from all things) shouldst not have extracted so much from mine host. To have gained the power of plucking its sting from a biting gibe, was worth as much, methinks, as thou mayst have paid to him for right good sack or malmsey. But come, good Master Steward, I leave the field, albeit thou seemest somewhat crest-fallen. Thine ire hath been vainly expended, seeing that it hath nothing moved me from my fancy, that I am the better archer of the two. But now, my merry-man, thou mayst draw off in peace; my business lieth with Master Lewen here."

"And mine also, therefore I budge not, Sir Page, I budge not!" said the Steward, walking close up to Lewen, an example which was immediately followed by Altham. "This is my

Lord's Secretary, and better fitted to be my companion than thine, I trow."

"We shall see," returned the Page fiercely. "And let me tell you, Master Steward, that I will fight for the better right to Lewen, rather than for the brightest dame in this land of ours. Even at his bidding I will not leave him in conference with thee now. If he goes with thee, I will follow, I will haunt thee. See whether thou be a match for me in any shape, Master Shirley!"

"Every day thy insolence and assurance become more manifest," returned the Steward. "Content thyself with comrades found amongst those of thy own creed, and confine thyself to the domestics of my Lady. My Lord's private Secretary is a person with whom thou canst have no manner of intercourse."

"That is according to thy judgment,

which is held in profound reverence by all, specially by myself," replied the Page with ironical humility. "Nathless, I again take upon me to entreat the favour of thy removal hence, or, if it be more convenient to thee to remain, we ourselves will depart."

"I budge not!" said the Steward. "Master Lewen, advertise the petulant Page that thou art no meet companion for him, that his frowardness is more repulsive than his frivolity, and never more misplaced than at this moment."

'The original cause of contention between you is obscure to me," returned Lewen. "And if it bear any comparison with the latter subject of dispute, it is light indeed. It is grievous to display so great want of charity on occasions such as these, which weigh not a feather in the balance of man's happiness and misery. The boy's petulance is irreverent; your invectives,

unseemly. An assumption of consequence in a beardless youth is contemptible; violent passion in a greybeard is ridiculous. Neither has a claim to my companionship except when I choose to yield it to him. At this moment I desire converse with neither; I seek solitude, and am for contemplation."

The Steward hemmed and fidgetted, on receiving Lewen's rebuke. The Page coloured, then became pale, and seemed to feel more poignantly than the occasion justified.

Lewen walked away from the scene of contention. The current of his thoughts had been diverted by it from their original channel. Solitude presented to him the objects with which his fancy was so powerfully impressed, and he would again have become absorbed by them, but for an interruption which awaited him.

He was standing just opposite to the ruins, profoundly meditative; at this moment, memory was the most active quality of his mind. The scene was highly favourable to its operation. It was the spot in which a stronger impression had been made on his imagination, than any of which it had formerly been susceptible. The beautiful being that realized the fondest dreams of fancy seemed again to stand before him, in all her brilliance and mystery. He looked up, and saw Philip Altham.

The subdued and mortified air of the Page checked Lewen's reproof. The boy stood before him with that pale, downcast countenance, that submissive attitude, which Lewen had formerly admired as so exquisitely gentle, and which he had first seen exhibited in the presence of the Countess.

"I am grieved," said he, "not that I returned the testiness of yon old man

with petulance, but that I excited your displeasure by it. Perhaps I deserved reprobation, but surely *his* was sufficiently bitter. I mean not to reproach, only to defend."

"If Shirley departs from all propriety of character, that excuses not you," returned Lewen, and his voice involuntarily softened. "I have seen his wayward humour, his impatience, his irascibility ; but I have seen also his grey hairs ; I have known his faithful services to his Lord ; I felt that he was of age to be thy grandsire, and that, therefore, his peevishness should have been passed over by thee, and his garrulous anger disregarded."

"Oh, but know you not, that such proceeding would heap provocation on provocation !" said the Page, regaining his archness and his brilliant complexion at the same moment. "Have you not perceived, that contempt would

gall him even as it would an angry woman? I will not dispute with thee on points of morality, hardly on points of general conduct; but in this particular, when the person to be managed is neither more nor less than an unwieldy pampered steward, trust me my tactics are better than thine. Let our good Master Shirley talk, and he will work himself into vehement passion, and cool on it again twenty times in an hour, so that one does but afford him the shadow of pretence for either. Nothing so much delights his self-consequence as opposition, and the reasons *wherefore* are manifold. It affords scope to his argumentative talents, on which he doth not a little pique himself; it enables him to recur to his favour with my Lord, which he will generally contrive to thrust into the sequence of his reasonings, by some management intricate beyond my poor

skill to develope; above all, it gives him a breathing of the lungs of inestimable benefit to a man of his habit. Oh, believe me, if I were, by any compulsion, compelled to quit the castle, he would regret my departure more keenly than any other of its inmates! At all seasons he would recall me with sorrow, because at all seasons I afford him a subject of animadversion or anger. Trust me, Master Shirley is a debtor to me, and not the less so, because he will never acknowledge the obligation."

"If your arguments are not convincing, they are at least unanswerable," returned Lewen. "But tell me, wherefore did you so desire to have intercourse with me at this moment? Was your business of a nature so important, that a delay would have been injurious to it?"

"Not so," returned Altham. "First, I was tired even to weariness of the

brawling of Shirley, and I could hit on no expedient to escape from it so feasible as that which was afforded to me by your presence. Secondly, I have not spoken with you for some days past. Thirdly, I wished to have your sentiments of this Lord Leighton,—this betrothed of the Lady Blanche Evelyn, —this probable future Lord of Arding."

Lewen shuddered slightly, but the action was not lost on the observant Page. It was discerned and reciprocated.

"I have seen but little of him," said Lewen presently. "He seems of a fair presence and of as gallant a bearing as the eye of a maiden could desire in man. Withal, he hath noble endowments, and a fame without spot or blemish. He is neither impetuous nor of a drowsy monotony of soul. He is altogether a young gentleman of high desert, and one who—one only point

excepted,—will be a spouse worthy to possess the Lady Blanche."

"Aye, but that point, Master Lewen!" said the Page; "doth it not outweigh all the specious qualities which otherwise glitter around him. Is it not a spot—a little cloud—on the face of the sun, which presently enlarges and eclipses all its splendor? He is the bitter persecutor of our church, the contemner of its holiest mysteries, the reviler of its most pious saints, the sacrilegious despoiler of their sanctuaries, the active agent in the diffusion of the heresies which abound in this country. Can such an one be a proper mate for the heir of Arding? Who that had the power of withholding it, would entrust so extensive an influence to an arch heretic like this man? No pious Catholic,—no true believer,—surely not a priest of God,—surely not the pupil of Ignatius!"

"And how is it to be prevented?" said Lewen thoughtfully. "Can the skill of man devise the means; can his ability execute them? Shall we wrestle by prayer, or persuasion, or argument? In all we have been foiled, and farther essay of them is vain. Shall we then resort to compulsion?"

"And is there not yet another means unessayed?" demanded the Page. "And does conscience present none to you? Oh, bethink you even now!"

Lewen turned his eye full on Altham. It was a glance of wonder and inquiry.

"Thou art altogether a mystery!" said he, after a pause. "What is there that thou knowest not, and who can develope thy means of attaining such knowledge? Stripling as thou art, is it possible that thou canst be in the confidence of—" he paused.

"Even of Valerius, wouldst thou

say?" added the Page, in a voice considerably depressed. "Trust nothing to appearances. *A mystery?* Aye, I *am* a mystery! And thou too art all mysterious! And is he, Valerius, the Confessor, more ingenuous, better understood? Are we not—are we not—all his machines, whom he moves at pleasure,—now here, now there, now pushing us forward in godliness, now drawing us back to plunge us into the midst of the snares and temptations of the world? Oh, there is no truth in the seeming of any of us! We are altogether lies and deceptions, stalking abroad amongst men in impenetrable disguises, beneath which lurks the dagger, perchance, which is to pierce the bosom that trusted us. We are, indeed, creatures fit for Heaven!"

The Page sighed heavily, and he smote his breast in bitterness. His

countenance was very melancholy, and his complexion pale. Lewen gazed on him with interest and compassion.

"Thou art yet young to be versed in such scenes as those thou describest," said he. "It seems to me, that thy imagination will be fatal to thee. It plunges thee into the midst of thick clouds and gloom, or into regions all glowing with exquisite light and splendor. Ever viewing passing events through such a medium, they appear to thee distorted and monstrous. Use thy judgment soberly, and regard not the vain delusions of fancy."

"Are they vain delusions, and is it *thou* who wouldst persuade me they are so?" replied the Page scornfully. "Young though I be, trust me, I have not been fooled by the fallacious covering my guides and companions have thrown over their actions. My hopes have never misled me; I *had* no hopes!

My fears never subdued me! I *had* no fears! Alone, desolate, fatherless, friendless, helpless, without a name, without a tie of kindred, a solitary link in the vast chain of human existence, bound to it by one only bond, and that of terror, what had I to fear, for what had I to lose? What had I to hope for, from what seed could a flower of promise and of brightness spring up for me? I am altogether wretched and outcast; one only verdant spot enriches the desert of my pilgrimage; and presently that will be scorched and pass away, or bloom in luxuriance and beauty for ever!"

He paused, and the energy of his manner had restored to him all his brilliancy of complexion. Lewen looked on him with an eye of pity and of admiration.

"I cannot speak to thee of thyself, for in sooth thou art altogether beyond

my comprehension," said he. "Trust me, if compassion for thy sorrows hath the power to alleviate them, my soul at this moment is engrossed by such a feeling."

The Page looked up into the eyes of Lewen, and a sunny smile irradiated his glowing face. "And it is a boon," said he, "that I would exchange for nothing beneath Heaven! Beneath Heaven? What would Heaven itself delight, thou absent?"

"Poor youth, in whom even impiety seems pardonable as the aberration of disordered intellect, rather than blamable as proceeding from the corruption of the heart, what powers of mind are lost in this morbid exuberance of imagination and sensibility!" said he. "For thy soul's sake, throw off from thee the wretched infatuation which menaces so fearfully thy eternal felicity! Dost thou put the friendships of this world,

encumbered with all their dross and their earthliness, in competition with the abundant glory, revealed to the saints hereafter ?"

"And shall I not—shall I not rather pluck the delicious fruit within my reach, and value it, and feed on it, than place my view on things beyond all mortal ken, which may perchance never be mine ?" demanded the Page with enthusiasm. "Is not this the manner of the wise of the earth ? Have I not examples amongst the sages and the lights of men ?"

"Follow not after the wisdom of the children of this generation, lest it should prove a snare and a stumbling-block to thee !" said Lewen. "Thy passions are fearful in their strength, and thou resignest thyself to their control without resistance—even with exultation !"

"And what shall resistance avail in such a conflict ?" demanded the Page.

"Are there none," he continued, suddenly exchanging the languor of his manner for a tone of energy and strength, "are there none, *whose vocation lieth elsewhere*, that have been subdued by those passions, have been absorbed by them even in their first moments of active existence, to the utter forgetfulness of those imperious ties, which should have enchained them in the dulness and lethargy of the grave, for ever? Oh yes, there are many such! Many who have bowed devoutly at the cold shrines of saintly images, until the kindling eyes of living beauty burned before them, and wooed the apostates to offer incense at a more animating shrine! Many who have conceived their gloomy convent the only spot on earth unchoked by thorns, and uninfested by serpents, until they have thrown themselves into the world, and have found the brightest roses are to be

plucked from those thorns, the most radiant jewels from the heads of those serpents! Oh then what was their bitterness of repentance? then what was the guilt into which they were precipitated? Neglect of vows—vows broken—violated—trampled on—perchance derided! Religion, apostatized from—cavilled at—doubted—disbelieved! They who had been worshipped and obeyed as saints on the earth, now contemned, reviled, abhorred, as impostors, betrayers, ensnarers of the will and the affections to utter and irretrievable misery! And then what is the fiend that shall last take up its abode in a soul such as this? that shall sear the brain with a burning brand—that shall wither the heart—that shall exhaust the springs of life? Is it not the demon, *Remorse?* And shall not his voice be heard in cursings and bitterness poured out on those who first lured the wretch to his undoing by hy-

pocrisy, and varnished representations of the world, and the passions that were called into exercise there?"

Lewen replied not. He was absorbed in those feelings which the words of the Page had aroused. He was thrown back immediately to the hopes and the sentiments of dawning life, to the enthusiasm which had been the propelling power in his surrendering of himself on the altar of monastic vows, to the course of action which had called that enthusiasm into action, and had trained it in such a direction. He dreamed again those visions which had so deeply impressed his boyish brain, of living an example to men, a saviour of souls, an instrument of conversion to a world, of dying not as others die, but of being wafted to eternity with Elijah in the chariot of fire; of canonization, that ulterior object of the churchman's ambition; of pilgrimages to his shrine, his

spirit hovering over it, witnessing, sanctifying, performing the miracles for which men journeyed to it. Then he recalled the pursuit which had carried him over Europe, had given patience to investigation, and zeal to inquiry. Then he remembered the object of his mission hither, what was to be attained, what was to be the price of its attainment. Then the scene which had occurred within those ruined walls before which he stood, rushed on his imagination; the music, the light, the paintings, and above all, that fair living thing which had given so dear, so unspeakable an interest to the rest, rapidly succeeded each other in his memory. There was so quick an alternation of pleasure and pain mingled with his recollections, that it was impossible to call either the predominating characteristic. He remembered his vows, and he saw himself excluded for ever from her society; he

remembered that Valerius had spoken of the possibility of his entering into active life, which involved the dispensation of those vows; and he shuddered, as he felt that the prospect of relinquishing them no longer appalled his mind, but, on the contrary, gratified it.

"It must be confessed," said the Page, who had amused himself, during Lewen's meditations, in stretching to its utmost tension, the cord of the bow which he still carried, and whose mind, though feeling every passing sentiment so deeply, yet seemed to retain the impression of none, "it must be confessed, that the Lady Blanche Evelyn and the young Lord Leighton are as finely matched for a fair exterior as any noble knight and dame in the land. And withal they seem to have laid in a plentiful stock of love on each side, which may furnish the vessel with provisions in a long voyage down the

of matrimony. Bright as the sun is around us, still my Lord gazed in my Lady's eyes with a look that seemed to say, *they* were the only sun whose brightness he desired should shine upon him. And she all blushes, and smiles, and loveliness, changing colour beneath his glances twenty times in a minute, seemed so fair, so passing fair, that I could not but think,—Saint Peter forgive me!—'twas a pity so sweet a flower should inclose a seed so poisonous,—so beautiful a being should be damned everlastingly! And yet so it is, even so —is it not?"

"Unless she be converted, and repent, that she may live!" replied Lewen with solemnity.

"A consummation which will never give, unless, by some miraculous interposition, her heretic lover should become a convert first," returned the Page. 'She will never forsake the

faith which is his. It is now doubly sanctified to her! Oh, believe—believe, all ascetic as thou art, that woman rarely loves any creed, but that which the man to whom she devotes herself, professes!"

Lewen replied not, for the observation of the Page had suggested a train of thought which he could not disperse.

"You are silent," continued Altham, regaining his indifference; "well, that is prudent, for I verily believe it is the only way by which controversy may be avoided by us, when such a point is under discussion. In sooth, my Lord Leighton will find the mind of my Lady Blanche as plastic to take any mould he chooses to give it, as wax. If her religious belief had wanted confirmation, my Lord of Arding could not have assigned his daughter to any authority more likely to confirm her in it. And the firmness of the lover to

tempered with gentleness, that *no* woman would desire to resist his sway, surely not the woman who loved him. There is much talk amongst my Lady's gentlewomen of their passing fondness for each other. It shows itself on every occasion; and specially in those acts of gallantry which ladies prize so highly. To one of these I shrewdly suspect I have been a witness, and they have not dreamed of it."

The Page paused, but Lewen was still silent.

"There is in yonder dilapidated monastery," resumed the Page, "a vaulted passage which is an admirable theatre for the display of musical skill. It is so constructed, that an echo causes the sound to reverberate in all directions. Last night, restless, for I am not much given to drowsiness, I left my couch and rambled hither. I paced to and fro in silence and meditation, my eye molested

by no appearance, mine ear by no sounds. I thought there was a delicious luxury in solitude and silence of which until then I had dreamed not. I was so visionary, that methought the tranquillity of a conventual life might even be blessed, above all, in such hours as that. Rendered devout by these thoughts, I hailed the sweet music that suddenly floated around me, as a sign sent by Heaven in token of approval. But visionary as I may be," he continued, smiling, "my dreams have generally been of a more earthly nature, and my mind retained not long an impression so unusual. I became conscious, that the harmony was altogether earthly, and I marvelled who could have chosen a place like this for the exhibition of such skill. Then I remembered that the Lady Blanche had spoken of the passage in the ruins to the Lord Leighton; and it was a natural consequence,

that he should try the powers of it. *Was* not this a probable surmise? Heard *you* those sounds in your last night's wanderings?"

"I?" said Lewen, in great emotion. "Wherefore ask you that question, and how knew you that I did wander?"

"What? have you not said that I am altogether mysterious, and yet ask you *such* a question?" demanded the Page. "Think you *that* music sprang from a source I wot not of? Oh, we are altogether a deception! Will you watch for it on this night also? Perhaps it may come in other guise!"

In a moment Altham had retreated, and vanished beyond Lewen's ken.

CHAPTER XI.

"The ghosts of the lately dead were near, and swam on the gloomy clouds; and far distant, in the dark silence of Lena, the feeble voices of death were faintly heard." *Ossian.*

"Why thy canonized bones hearsed in death
Have burst their cerements? why the sepulchre
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again? What may this mean,
That thou, dead corpse,
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous?" *Shakspeare.*

LEWEN was in the situation of a man bewildered in the intricate paths of a forest, who gladly avails himself of the slightest hint by which he may thread its mazes, convinced that he cannot es-

sibly become more embarrassed in the labyrinth.

The Page had always afforded him subject of admiration and conjecture. The variety of aspects under which he had appeared, had defied all power to establish the identity of his character. Involuntarily Lewen had become more deeply interested, as the mystery of Altham had increased. He had spent so much time in efforts to develope it, that, unconsciously, he had become enamoured of it. The knowledge of the boy appeared little less than miraculous, when considered either with regard to his years, or when compared with that possessed by men in general. It was of a nature widely different from that which distinguished Lewen himself, and perhaps was the more highly appreciated by him on that account. The very violence of Altham's passions rendered Lewen's interest in him more intense; they seemed

to carry the boy completely out of himself, to plunge him into continual danger, and to menace him with future evil. Lewen felt himself not only the poor Page's friend, but, in an eminent degree, his guardian and protector. Hence, every sentiment that escaped Altham, deeply impressed Lewen. At this moment, when his own mind was absorbed by remembrances of the preceding night, the sudden recurrence of the Page to the same theme, roused attention and amazement to their highest pitch. And when the boy, in the moment of departure, had asked, "*think you that music sprang from a source I wot not of?*" and had added, "*will you not watch for it on this night also? perhaps it may come in other guise*," Lewen involuntarily admitted as affirmation, what was merely a supposition of possibility; and he acted accordingly.

Lewen watched the setting of the sun more anxiously than ever Persian idolater hailed its rising. And it set gloomy in thick clouds. At midnight the elements raged furiously. The storm pelted against Lewen, but he heeded it not. The thunder rolled above his head in protracted cadence, and he bent not his knee; he prayed not in his heart. The lightning played around the ruins of the monastery, and he beheld it only because it distinctly illuminated the place of entrance. The Heavens were colourless and imperceptible through the thick darkness of the atmosphere, but Lewen's views were bent on the earth. Every thought of his heart pointed thither; his hopes, his fears, his feelings, were now excited by objects entirely earthly. It was a woman who occupied him; a woman for whom he braved, for whom he disregarded, the an[illegible]ments; a woman who had

trampled down the altar he had believed so firmly erected in his heart. Her form rose before him in the midst of the storm, like a spirit of light shrouded in a pavilion of darkness. She alone, though absent, was visible to him,—things present were unseen and disregarded.

With a trembling heart, and with faltering, unequal steps, he passed through the ruined portal. The impenetrable darkness appalled him not. His imagination was too much occupied by an approaching future, to shrink from the difficulties of that present which led to it. He proceeded slowly, for he had no guide either of light or sound; but there were no obstructions to his progress. It seemed that he was pacing through a long, dreary aisle, the pavement of which was smooth and level. Presently he felt an impediment to his farther advance; it was the altar

steps. At that instant the flashing of the lightning flickered over their polished surface. Lewen shuddered. He remembered the feelings of devotion which had prostrated him there on the preceding night. "And why is it thus different with thee now, thou trembler?" he said, apostrophizing his heart. "Why is thy pulsation now as high as on the last night, and yet wherefore beat thy throbbings for a cause so widely different? Can the lapse of a few hours have wrought so vast a change in thee? And is not only the destiny of man, but are his feelings, his habits, his passions, even his devotion, at the sport of time? Can he command, and calculate upon, nothing that belongs to himself? Why dost thou not now swell with the ardour of devotion,—why are not thy aspirings after Heaven,—why dost not thou rise as formerly from the earth,

even as if upborne by a seraph's wing? Methinks I would pray even now, and why can I not?"

As Lewen asked himself this question, his head sunk upon his breast. The answer was given, but it was unuttered. The fair vision that had so intensely occupied him during the last day, that had *set her seal upon his heart*, now seemed to rise before him in all her splendor of beauty and situation. *Pray?* and to what saint? *Kneel?* and to what shrine? *Supplicate?* and for what boon? *Woman* had become his saint; *woman's beauty* was the shrine at which he bowed; *woman's love* was the boon he would supplicate! This truth, broad, plain, and unsoftened, now, and for the first time, distinctly presented itself to him. His heart—his conscience reproached him. He smote upon his breast in bitter penitence. In that deep silence his prolonged sighs

were audible, his indistinct murmurs were heard. The conflict was terrible, and the monk might have triumphed over the man, but for the occurrence of one of those circumstances on which the destiny of humanity so much depends.

A single tone of music penetrated through that silence. Lewen started—his heart beat violently—*his thoughts paused;* but even the agony of his attention could not catch another tone. Then he sighed deeply, and that sigh seemed to relieve the oppression of his soul, and his heart beat more calmly. But he was not suffered to preserve that calmness. When his attention became less eager, he was aroused by a repetition of the harmony. It was dwelt on—it was prolonged. Then the note was varied, and it swelled gradually into a grave martial measure. Now it seemed very near to Lewen, and the *piano* and the *forte* of the strain equally ascertained

the vicinity of the musician. Presently it receded slowly, in the measured time of the melody. Lewen pursued it—it lingered, and he also remained stationary. Then it moved onwards again, and he followed it. Gradually it became more dirge-like. Lewen's ear recognized the funeral anthems in which he had been accustomed to unite in his days of former years. The contrast of the situation he then filled, of the feelings by which he was then occupied, of the hopes which then sustained him, to those which *now* actuated him, which had led him hither, which still detained him here, struck him forcibly. He shuddered, paused, listened. The music still receded. He was irresolute; but the image of that fair creature, *that* image into the very form of which all his own passions seemed moulded, rose up before him. He went on, and his step was quicker, like that of one who

stands to ascertain what path he is pursuing, and proving his inability to do so, hastens on in that he already treads, that he may learn how far he has advanced on his journey, or how much he has deviated from the right path, by the termination of his present one.

Long, very long, did Lewen pursue the sound; and it seemed to him the longer, because his progress was very slow, and because he anxiously panted after that goal which he believed would be the boundary of his gloomy perambulation. Suddenly the sound ceased altogether, but the darkness remained. Lewen had hitherto ardently desired to hear the sound no more. He recollected at what a moment it had ceased on the preceding night, and he had not expected otherwise on this. Nothing could be more perfectly contrasted. *Then* it had paused in the midst of unshadowed light; *now*, in unillumined, un-

broken darkness. His present situation was the most irksome, in his state of feeling, that can be imagined. It reduced him into passive inactivity, when every faculty of his soul thirsted for exercise. He was compelled to remain stationary, or to retrace his steps, because he knew not what obstacles might obstruct his onward path; he knew not what surrounded him. The heart of Lewen, for the first time in the course of his existence, whispered an execration; but the moment of its conception was that of repentance. That darkness was favourable to the revival of all his early associations. At such an hour, in his convent, he had been accustomed to prostrate himself on the cold pavement of the altar, to implore Divine grace, to mortify his body, to render himself fit for the performance of his Master's work, to which he believed himself called. In the midst of *that*

darkness, his imagination had delighted him with celestial visions of the blessed. His very dreams were heavenly. He had not felt himself in solitude. He had held communion with saints that had been men like himself, who had passed through the pilgrimage of their probation, as he was labouring to pass through it, and who hovered over the altar at which they had formerly kneeled. *Now* his thoughts were prisoned to this earth, and he wished not to break the fetters that bound them there. His solitude was perfect and bitter. He longed for the presence of a mortal being,—of a woman;—one from whose society he was excluded for ever, except as he saw her in the light of a penitent. Lewen felt his thraldom, and he trembled. But enchained by the influence of that infatuation which pursued him, he desired not to escape from it. A mo-

narch's ransom would not have tempted him to recede at this moment. He stood resolute, although perturbed; determined what course to pursue, though anxious for the means of action, and agitated concerning the nature of them.

A gleam of light now glimmered across the darkness, and disclosed to Lewen a vaulted space of indefinable extent. The light was withdrawn, then it flashed again, and his heart was, for a moment, appalled, as he recognized those symbols which adorn the last receptacle of mortality. The music was now heard more audibly, and Lewen became almost breathless as he listened to the instrumental recitation of a whole mass for the dead. When it was concluded, the vault echoed to a prolonged groan, as proceeding from a spirit just on the verge of dismemberment from its body. Then the light

disappeared, and there was unbroken darkness.

Lewen's eyes were fixed upwards, and presently he saw an illuminated point, which gradually widened into a circle, fading away until its extremities mingled with the darkness. It was the reflection of a light proceeding from a centre on which Lewen's glance was now rivetted. It was a large black marble tomb, on which reposed a figure in white vestments. At each angle there was a lamp, which had suddenly, and, by some invisible means, been enlightened. The figure that had hitherto been recumbent, gradually arose and stood upon the tomb. It was tall, and its folding garments did not conceal its disproportionate slenderness. But Lewen's eyes were fixed on the face; and, pallid in all the colourlessness of the grave, he recognised the never-to-be-forgotten features of

the man whom he had loved as a father, whom he had reverenced as a saint, to whom his whole life had, hitherto, been one act of obedience—of IGNATIUS DE LOYOLA.

His first impulse carried him to the foot of the tomb, and he prostrated himself there, as craving the benediction he had been accustomed to receive from those lips.

The arms of the figure were stretched out and crossed over him, but it spoke not, and its countenance exhibited no change of expression accordant with the benignity of its action. It was fixed and motionless. The eyes were glassy, and moved not,—neither did the lips part,—neither did the breathings of life seem to proceed thence. Lewen, always looking upwards, shuddered convulsively at the lifelessness of the face that bent on him a cold, changeless, never-varying glance. He endeavoured

to speak, but his parched tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, and no power of speech was his.

The figure extended the forefinger of its right hand, as if to arrest Lewen's attention. In the intenseness of expectation, he almost ceased to breathe, and the silence was well suited to a scene in which it seemed that mortal man was to hold converse with the revived dead.

" Son of my adoption, child of my love, pupil of my knowledge, who never yet hast slighted aught of reproof or exhortation I have addressed to thee, when, like thyself, I lived a being of this world, incline thine ear to me even now !"—it said, and the pale lips moved not, neither did the form breathe with visible life. Its gesture was statue-like ; it seemed to possess the power of extending the arm, and then the muscles appeared to become rigid, and to lose all

capability of extension or contraction. "Scarcely four-and-twenty hours of that time which is now nought to me, have passed away since I was one amongst the children of men, since I lived, and moved, and breathed, even as thou dost. And now how vast the change! My fellow-men came to gaze upon me—to touch me—to hold converse with me—as something sacred—something of more than mortal mould. And when I am really clad in immortality, and when I have dropped the garments of corruption, even thy cheek becomes pale, my son, and thy heart trembles, and thy blood is chilled by terror at my presence! This is not well, this is not fitting! It is Ignatius who stands before thee; be his commands welcome to thee, and see thou that they be obeyed! I have ever been with thee during thy sojournings here; I have watched thy actions;

I have penetrated thy secret thoughts; I know thy struggles; I know the wound of thy spirit, and I would heal it. Thou wert born to a high destiny and to great and worthy actions! Thou wert born to be a valiant soldier in the church militant, to render it triumphant, and to destroy the puny edifice which the heirs of perdition have erected on its ruins! But the path to be trodden by thee is not such as thy inclination has traced. Not under the cowl, but beneath an Earl's coronet, must thou perform such good and worthy service to our church. Thy House is powerful, and they of the earth must use earthly means even to the attainment of Heavenly ends! Such power must not be possessed by an arch-heretic, when a devoted servant of the true church can honourably and openly wrest it from him! Go! forget thy former plans of privacy and seclusion.

Assert thy rights. Satisfy thy love, for it is lawful. It is Ignatius who absolves thee from thy vows,—it is Ignatius who thus counsels thee,—it is Ignatius whose spirit will inspire the holy Valerius to occupy that place, which himself has hitherto filled."

If the figure spoke more, Lewen heard him not. Overpowered by that situation in which he had so unexpectedly, without preparation or warning, been placed, so terrible and appalling to the human heart, of holding converse with those who have lost all the feelings, and propensities, and functions of humanity;—overwhelmed by the struggle between early predilections and present passions; between remorse at the breach of his vows,—a breach which he felt had virtually been made, in the moment that he admitted love for woman to occupy his mind—and the thrill of pleasure that caused his heart

to throb, and his breast to heave, as the voice of Ignatius himself absolved him from those vows, and pronounced such love to be lawful ;—subdued by misery and felicity so novel and so blended, that they appeared inseparable ;—lingering fondly on those hopes and prospects which had once comprehended all the bliss he desired, yet contemplating with ecstacy the picture of *new* hopes, and new prospects, and new felicities, which was suddenly unrolled to his view by the all-powerful Ignatius ;—he had fallen senseless.

When he regained perception, he felt the night-air blow coldly across his temples. He looked upwards and around, but still he could discern no object. He was as one who awakes from a dream of powerful impression, and endeavours to recall it. But his brain was bewildered, and refused to present objects to him distinctly. He

closed his eyes, as if opening them, though but to utter darkness, prevented that perfect attention which he desired to direct internally. His temples throbbed, and his whole frame was fevered by the violent excitation of his feelings. He felt the luxury of the air breathing over his forehead, and he sighed deeply as if to inhale it. Gradually he recollected the purpose for which he had entered those ruins, on the threshold of which he was now leaning. He remembered the solemn funereal music, the dirge which had so aptly prefaced the scene into which he had been introduced, and which might have prepared him for subsequent events, if his mind had not been entirely occupied by objects of brightness, and the passions excited by them. He recalled the anxiety, the terror, that had caused his brain to throb and his heart to beat thick; the pauses, the darkness, the

silence, so appalling in their continuance, so terrible in their termination. Then that pale light seemed again to glimmer in a point over his head, and his eye felt to travel downwards, and again recognized the lamps of that sable tomb as its origin. And he remembered that he had seen and spoken to Ignatius,—to Ignatius who was no longer to be numbered amongst the living, who had stood before him clad in the cerements of the grave,—had risen on his retiring eye as the spectre of the prophet at the invocation of the Israelitish monarch. Every word, breathed in its sepulchral hollowness of tone, again vibrated on his ear. It was a voice well befitting a *brother of the dead*, and it marked the passing away of corporeal organization more forcibly than the pallid, immoveable countenance, than the still form, the rigid muscles, the breathless body. He shrunk from that

voice, but it became more distinct, and pierced his senses more deeply; and the fixed, stirless eye glared on him. He drew his own eyelids more closely, but that glassy glance of Ignatius penetrated through them. His imagination seemed rapidly heightening into delirium; he prolonged the past into the present, and he could not escape from it. It surrounded him; it impressed his soul, and it dwelt in his bosom. He breathed heavily, and his eyelids unclosed.

"This has been a terrible swoon, Master Lewen, deep, and of some continuance. Why, a weak woman and a court-lady to boot, could not display such a weakness more frequently than thou. And what, in the name of the saints, could draw you forth of your snug apartment at a season like this in such a night? Why, the Heavens themselves wept over the unsheltered

wretch who was houseless in a darkness so thick! But cheerly—cheerly, friend! Even now the moon is struggling through an envious cloud that seems bent on thwarting her desire to display her shining face; presently we will have light, and that a soft, melancholy, sober light, which will accord most exquisitely with thy taste. Come, raise thee, and try to walk with the assistance of my arm. By the rood, 'tis well thou wert not bred a soldier! A touch like this would have chanced most inopportunely within bowshot of the enemy, and thou wouldst have been branded with shame eternally! Scapegrace as I am, I would make the better cavalier of the two; and, for your archery, I think I am the better hand even now!"

Lewen recognized the voice of Altham, and he evinced his recognition by a grateful pressure of the hand which supported him. In all hours of danger

that Page was near him; he seemed to possess some instinctive power of ascertaining the precise moment when his services would be most welcome. Lewen, in his moods of joy or content, had rarely met the boy; but in malady, or unhappiness and sorrow, he was near him ever. He seemed a self-elected guardian of Lewen's wanderings; invisibly watching over him, and appearing only when his presence might be desirable. Lewen remembered the monition he had, on that day, received from Altham, that he should again *watch on this night also*, and he spoke in a tone of impatient inquiry.

"Thou canst not but remember our colloquy at noon-tide; well, I *have* watched on this night also, and where wast thou?"

"And didst thou hear those sweet sounds, and were they pleasant and gentle, such as should welcome gallant

knight to the bower of lady fair ?" said Altham, and his voice had a blended malice and sweetness to which Lewen was well accustomed in him.

" Sounds ? Aye, Page, I *did* hear sounds ! And there was music, but of that revel which bids the earth-worm to its banquet ! There *was* melody, but of that sort that says to the grave, *thou art my mother*, and to dust, *thou art my brother and my sister*, and *of thee I am moulded.* There was a light too, but it gleamed from the tomb, and illuminated a charnel-house. There was a voice also to say words of welcome and benison to those who entered in ; but it was the voice of the dead ! And there were lips whence that voice issued, but they were ghastly and breathless ! And there was a form in the midst of that gloomy light, that certifier of darkness ; but no breath of life issued from its nostrils, its pulses did not beat, and its

breast did not heave! It was the dead that had burst the barriers of its grave!" said Lewen, and he withdrew himself from the embrace of the Page, in which he had hitherto half reclined, and sat upright.

"What? and thou hast seen a ghostly apparition, hast thou?" said the Page in derision. "Verily, thy imagination can conjure up very comely spectres it seems! So, in punishment for thy crime of perambulating, with unhallowed step, the scenes in which he had formerly ruled right piously, some well-favoured abbot hath waylaid thee, and would, perchance, have seized on thy corporal substance, and have conveyed thee unwilling to the nether regions of penance and pain, if thy good angel had not battled manfully with him. Beshrew my heart, if one of our gentlewomen could have been more vapourish than thou!"

"This is idle jesting," replied Lewen. "Unwillingly on my part, thou hast obtained more of my confidence than I would have bestowed on thee, and thou knowest that I am not likely to start at shadows."

"But thou art a visionary," returned the Page, "and therefore likely to be deluded."

"And could every sense be played upon to co-operate in producing such an illusion?" demanded Lewen with impatience. "I heard the sounds, boy, not as the music of the preceding night, melancholy indeed, but gentle and soothing; it was now dirge-like and holy, the mass for the dead! And could I have followed it through impenetrable darkness, and have observed every pause so well, that memory even now retains them, by the illusions of fancy? And could I have watched the gradual rising of a light to disperse that darkness,

which shone palely and solemnly, and trembled over a black tomb? And was all this but an illusion of fancy? And could I have seen that figure first prostrate—then erect—stretch out its full proportions before me, and disclose to my shrinking sight the never-to-be-forgotten form, the extraordinary features of Ignatius de Loyola? Could any juggler so draw every sense into his service as to make all collude upon the master of them? If I be a visionary, boy, even as thou sayest, *this* were a conjuration to be passed on none but a madman."

"'Tis passing strange!" acquiesced the boy. "And this was not a scene similar to that to which the music of the former night called you?"

Lewen paused. His consciousness of the direction whither his affections tended, rendered him desirous of preserving profound mystery with regard

to the very existence of her who engrossed them.

"Have you not said that *that music sprung from a source you wot of?*" demanded Lewen. "How needless, then, is this thy question!"

"Perhaps, I have but a suspicion thereupon, and would be glad to have my doubts resolved into certainty by thee!" replied the Page.

"And, perhaps, I would rather leave thee to doubt," returned Lewen.

"That will be according to your own good pleasure, Master Lewen," replied Altham calmly; "but I think a shrewd man would rather tell all, than have one part known, and the other suspected, seeing that the reality is hardly so bad as the doubt."

"Go, to—thou art but a boy—an arrant trifler!" said Lewen.

"And yet thou art in the power of this trifler, to be played upon by him as

he lists!" said the Page with contempt. "Why, what a bubble is thy learning and thy wisdom, if it cannot place thee beyond the idle pranks of an impish boy! Canst thou not imagine it very possible, that the pageant presented to thee was spread out by the hand of this trifler, as thou callest him; that thou wast his bidden guest, and that he himself received thee?"

"Credulity itself would laugh to scorn such an insinuation," returned Lewen calmly.

"Credulity would laugh then ere it had well examined its subject," replied the Page, with ineffable bitterness, "Neither am I a thing to be scorned, monk! The trifler before thee hath powers that thou dreamest not of! Thinkest thou, that he who so soon penetrated the disguise of the zealous reformer, the pious Protestant Secretary of the Earl of Arding, hath not

used his shrewdness to purposes as deep, that lie, perhaps, beyond thy ken! Thou hast but an uncertain confidant in so flighty a varlet as myself, methinks!"

"Thou wouldst not betray me, villain!" said Lewen suddenly starting up, and grasping the shoulder of the Page.

"Remove thy gripe," returned Altham, "because it tortures me, and will avail thee nothing. Hast thou forgotten, that one shrill scream of mine will rouse the drowsy inhabitants of yonder castle, and bring them to the rescue? Bethink thee, then, what answer wilt thou give, for that thou art here in an hour which others dedicate to rest and sleep? Remember thee, there are no midnight services in thy new religion; and the cloak of piety, however closely drawn, would, in this case, but show the hypocrite beneath it.

Neither delude thyself with believing, that thy superior strength will give thee one tie over me. I would not stoop to fasten my Lady's sandal on compulsion! If I preserve thy secret, thou wilt be indebted only to mine honour, and I will receive for such trust no guerdon but thy gratitude. Release me; thou seest I am not to be terrified, and I think thou art of no temper to try, if I be not to be cajoled."

Lewen removed his hand from the shoulder of Altham, but he spoke not.

"Come," resumed the Page, "I pardon thy misgivings, seeing that thy present situation is one in which danger doth, of a truth, abound, and if thou lookest not well to thyself, it may perchance encompass thee. I know well that thou art fretted by the unexpected *apparition*, I think thou callest it, which has risen on thy unprepared view to-night. Thou didst not enter this holy

pile, thinking to meet so grim an occupant. Thou wast prepared with words more bland and looks more gentle, perchance, than the occasion called for!"

Lewen turned full on the boy, but he could not distinguish the expression of his countenance by the uncertain light of the just emerging moon.

"Would that I might comprehend thee!" said he, at length. "Would that I could solve the mysteries that have encompassed me during my sojourning here!"

"And, amongst others, that which ath concern with the fair woman?" said the Page whisperingly, laying his hand on the arm of Lewen.

Lewen seized that hand, and he pressed it closely. "Wonderful boy," he said, "my kind protector, my ever ready comforter, canst thou administer to *this* wound also?"

"A wound given thee by two blue eyes, meanest thou?" demanded the Page laughing. "Verily, nay; methinks that can scarcely be done by any but the archer who drew the bow. And yet, can it be? or dost thou jest with my boyhood? That *thou*, the hermit, the man without passions, the preacher of coldness, the vowed one, the insensible pupil of de Loyola, dost *thou* love a woman? Shalt *thou* become apostate?"

"Torment me not! Torture me not! But to the question! Knowest thou aught of her?" demanded Lewen impetuously.

"Stay, let there be no confusion of persons here," replied the Page. "We are agreed in a woman that hath a pair of blue eyes. And the hair?—"

"Of a bright gold colour, even resembling thy own," added Lewen.

"Resembling mine?" said the Page, and his voice faltered. "Well, and she was of complexion?—"

"Fair, even as thou art!"

"And of stature?—"

"Some little taller than thyself."

"And a voice?—"

"Soft as thine in thy gentlest moments!"

"In truth, I may well pique myself on the resemblance thy fancy has discovered between me and this paragon, who had charms to warm a heart so cold as thine," said the Page, and his voice had not that clear sweetness to which Lewen had just alluded,—it was husky and broken. "And the decorations of her person served to set forth her beauty in its brightest tints, by reason of their simplicity, seeing the eye was not distracted from the contemplation of it by the gorgeous colouring of her garments?"

"Even so," replied Lewen, and his heart beat with expectation, as the Page proceeded to particularise in a manner, that proved him well acquainted with her who was his subject.

"And she appeared to thee in a scene which was worthy of her?" pursued Altham. "Let me see; my minutes describe an extensive saloon, adorned with rich paintings in frames exquisitely carved and gilt."

"Even so."

"The light was so disposed as to produce an effect brilliant, but not oppressive," proceeded the Page. "There were certain candelabras of massy silver in such artful positions, that each reflected back the splendour bestowed by the other. And the pendants refracted the splendid rays like diamonds. And the hue of that light altogether was mellow, and of a rich autumnal tint,

such as one sees in an August evening."

"Oh, thou must have been present to describe all things so perfectly!" exclaimed Lewen eagerly. "I acknowledge the accuracy of thy transcript, and let so much suffice. Now, tell me, in pledge of thy truth to me—of thy so much vaunted friendship for me—whither shall I betake me—that I may again behold her?"

"My knowledge extends not much beyond what thou already knowest," replied Altham. "Natheless, albeit I cannot exactly resolve thy question, I may say to thee, for the present she is invisible to thee."

Lewen sighed audibly, and remained silent.

"But hope all things," resumed the Page. "I will sooner forsake thee, than she will cease to think of thee;

I will sooner abandon thee, than she will forget thee ; I will sooner prove thine enemy, than she will choose another friend. Content thee with knowing, that until she may meet thee again, thy own impatience exceeds not hers. Win her love and wear it ! It is worth thy efforts ; for a passion, of whose violence thou dreamest not, burns in her bosom. She is a woman, and she loves thee ! Guard well this secret, and enjoy thy consciousness."

"She loves me !" repeated Lewen, and his voice was low, as if he feared lest the wind should catch the precious words, and convey them to unhallowed ears.

"Let that pass," replied the Page. "Thou hast now wherewithal to meditate upon ; let us, therefore, to other themes. Thou wast too much occupied by thy own concerns yesterday to

observe curiously those which more immediately affect others; and I question, if thou art not altogether a stranger to the events which are passing in the castle. Are you aware, that we shall soon lose one of the inmates that most graces our halls and bowers?"

"The Lord Leighton departs, then?" said Lewen, and he spoke with an air of abstraction that evidently indicated how little interest he took in the discussion.

"Even at break of day," replied Altham. "But this is not all; our gates will scarcely be closed after his retinue, when they will re-open to the passage of the Lady Blanche Evelyn, who, attended by the Chaplain of my Lord, wends to the gay city of London—that Babylon of our day,—to be present at the nuptials of the Lady Jane Grey with

the Lord Guildford Dudley, which take place forthwith."

"This is somewhat sudden, is it not?" demanded Lewen, with an appearance of revived interest.

"Yet expected," replied the Page. "My Lord Leighton's retinue will presently be stirring, in preparation for their departure; and, mehinsks we had better get under shelter. Time hath worn away unmarked by us, but yonder eastern point is becoming ruddy, and threatens day upon us, ere we are well prepared to meet its piercing eye. I would not we should be detected here. It might beget suspicion; and suspicion, as thou knowest, causeth inquiry, and inquiry leads to discovery, which we cannot breast at this moment. Come, suffer me to be thy guide. I could thread the most retired walks of these grounds in safety, though blind-

folded, and I will conduct thee by a secure path to that postern, of which the kindness of our worthy Steward hath put thee in possession of the key."

CHAPTER XII.

> " Every virtue,
> Which, parted unto others, gave them name,
> Flowed mixed in him." *Ben Jonson.*

> " Dum in dubio est animus, paulò momento huc
> illuc impellitur." *Terence.*

IT was June, and the Summer was bright and beauteous. A radiant sun laughed over the face of nature, embellishing, vivifying, gladdening it, quickening the universal pulse of creation with exuberance of vitality; joyous and joy-inspiring. It awakened the mechanic and the beggar to a feeling

of cheerfulness ; it darted also into the chambers of the palace. It brightened over the splendid couch from which the evanescence and the poverty of the honours, the pageantry, the sumptuousness of royalty were proclaimed with the terror of, and in a tone louder than, the thunder-clap bursting over the mountains. He whom all "the circumstances of kingliness" had adorned ; he who regarded his crown as the symbol that reminded him of immense responsibility ; who discerned the shroud escaping from beneath the gorgeous foldings of the ermined robe of state ; who bore royalty with the meekness of a saint, and the kindliness of the angel of benevolence,—a youth,—a prince,—and even now a king ;—*he*—this loved one—reclined with languid head, and with an eye that had lost the sparkle of the spring-tide of life, sometimes scarcely retaining the gleam of that living lustre

which indicates that the soul yet inhabits there, at other times emitting the feverish fire of that distemper which is the scourge of youth, and which, with Pagan pomp, embellishes the victim it sacrifices ;—Edward the Sixth was treading on the borders of the fearful " valley of the shadow of " death."

That repose—that exemption from earthly care—which, in this last dark hour, meaner men claim as a right, and wise men woo as a blessing,—that soothing which friendship demands, and which reciprocal friendship allays the bitterness of its grief by paying, must scarcely be prayed for by the dying Monarch. The agitation of cabal,—the restlessness of faction, surround him, even when the pomp and the pageantry of power no longer delude the eye, to cheat the soul of the

consciousness of the weight of that splendor which oppresses it. The severer duties which, in the plenitude of health and strength, bear heavily on him born to rule, claim the attention of his enfeebled spirit, and chain it to the earth, even when all its aspirings are after immortality, when it pants to burst the fetters imposed by time, and to sail, infinitely free, in the empyrean of space—of eternity.

Death could not chase ambition from the last sanctuary of receding life. It presented its earth-born aspect to the young and saintly King in the form of the proud and aspiring Duke of Northumberland. He watched, with intense scrutiny, every fluctuation of feeling, he detected every almost imperceptible emotion, that disturbed the calm of Edward's spirit. He discerned, with no dissatisfied eye, the conflict

between the charities of private affection and the patriotism of public devotedness ;—between love to those who were nearest—and one the dearest—to him, and duty to a higher relation—even to the Father of Light and Life! The state of the religious interests of his kingdom, fluctuating between Protestantism and Papistry, pressed heavily on the heart of the young King. According to the Act of Succession passed by Henry the Eighth, the Lady Mary was Edward's immediate heir. He could not forget the attachment she had always manifested for the ancient faith. He remembered that her early years had been spent under the Countess of Salisbury, the mother of that confirmed and devoted Papist, Cardinal Pole. He recalled her contumacy and delay in acknowledging the supremacy of her father as head of the

church on earth ;* her continuing to have mass said in her house, after it was forbidden by the protecting council ;

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* The following is an extract of that letter which, after great struggles and long delay, Mary wrote to the King, and which procured for her a return of his favour :—

"*Item*,—I do recognize, accept, take, re-"pute, and acknowledge the King's Highness "to be supreme head in earth, under Christ, "of the Church of England ; and do utterly "refuse the Bishop of Rome's pretended au-"thority, power, and jurisdiction within this "realm heretofore usurped, according to the "laws and statutes made in that behalf, and "of all the King's true subjects humbly re-"ceived, admitted, obeyed, kept, and observed ; "and also do utterly renounce and forsake all "manner of remedy, interest, and advantage, "which I may by any means claim by the "Bishop of Rome's laws, process, jurisdiction, "or sentence, at this present time, or in any wise "hereafter, by any manner of title, colour, "mean, or case, that is, shall, or can be devised "for that purpose."

her rejection of the new form of prayer; and her continual choice of friends more than suspected of inclining to the Roman communion.' She had, besides, strong personal motives of devotion to this creed, and of reverence to the Papal power. The tie of childhood attached her to it,—for it had been the religion of her mother, the good and unfortunate Catherine of Arragon;—the bond of filial feeling and of womanly pride bound her to it;—for its head had refused to sanction the divorce of that parent; and, by consequence, had refused to stigmatize her own birth. And although she herself (the better to regain the favour of her King and father), had recognized the validity of that Act of Divorce, *

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* In another paragraph of the letter quoted above, Mary writes:—

" *Item*,—I do freely, frankly, and for the

it cannot be supposed that her real sentiments led her to a declaration which proclaimed her own illegitimacy, and invalidated for ever her right of succession to the crown.

Edward and Mary, so widely differing in their mode of receiving this strong and principal influence on human character, each regarding the religion of the other as a "damnable heresy," and comprehending, that zealous attachment to their separate faith was a vital and active principle in the mind of each, could not avoid transferring a portion of their dislike of the creed, to the person of the believer. To annul Mary's right

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"discharge of my duty towards God, and the "King's Highness and his laws, without other "respect, recognize, and acknowledge, that the "marriage heretofore had between his Ma-"jesty and my mother, the late Princess "Dowager, was, by God's law, and man's law, "incestuous and unlawful."

of succession was, therefore, not repugnant to any tenderness of private friendship, or of fraternal affection. But Elizabeth was placed, with respect to her royal brother, in a position diametrically opposite. His heart revolted at the prospect of depriving *her*, the pious, the attached sister of his affection, the warm disciple of the same faith, of her royal birthright, her princely hopes; of that purple which she would adorn; of that sceptre which she seemed able to poise with consummate skill and unbending integrity; of that crown which her early promise indicated that she would transmit to posterity, bright and untarnished as patriotism could hope, or kingly pride desire, to receive it. The spirit of Edward was torn by the conflict, and the drops bursting from the throes of mental agony, mingled with the death-damp on his brow.

Understanding accurately the position

of the mind of the royal invalid, with that subtle address which was his leading characteristic, and which marked every event that conduced to his attaining and momentarily enjoying that elevation after which his gigantic ambition panted, the Duke of Northumberland seized this moment to press on the mind of the young king a conviction of the evils, that, from Mary's known attachment to the ancient faith, must result to the Reformed religion, if she succeeded to the throne. Edward could not offer contradiction to such a statement, because his own mind was entirely occupied by a conviction of the truth of it. Northumberland had a difficult task in combating the King's affectionate antipathy to deprive Elizabeth of her birthright. To such an act of apparent injustice he was able to bend his sovereign only by affording to it a portion of a martyr's praise, by giving it the sem-

blance of a sacrifice made to religion and patriotism. Perhaps the heart of the youthful monarch was dazzled by the splendid devotion that was made the motive of the action, and which, in his own heart, undoubtedly was so. Northumberland and his party, taking advantage of the state of his mind, wrought on him to settle the crown by his letters patent on Lady Jane Grey, a measure to which Edward was probably the more inclined on account of the affection he had always borne to his youthful cousin, whose age and whose endowments were on a par with his own.

Notwithstanding the inclinations of the king, if we assume the position that they *did* so incline, it required art equal to that of Northumberland to render the claims of Jane in any degree authentic. Her alliance to the royal blood came by her mother the Duchess of Suffolk, daughter of Mary Queen Dowager of

France, who was also the sister of Henry the Eighth. How could Jane, a female, reign whilst her mother yet lived? It is true the Empress Maud, and the Countess of Richmond, had each yielded up her claim in favour of her child, but that child was a son in both instances. To resign pretensions in favour of a daughter was not only uncommon, but totally without precedent. The point was, however, gained as much, perhaps, from the weakness of the Duke of Suffolk as by the address of the Duke of Northumberland, although by an extraordinary clause, Jane's pretensions were made valid, even if the Duchess, from whom she derived them, should have a son, who would, by law and precedent, be the natural heir to all the claims of his mother. The Queen of Scotland's right to the English throne was also prior to that of the Suffolk line. It was affirmed, that *this* was set

aside by the testament of Henry the Eighth, which placed the representatives of the Suffolk claims next in succession to his own immediate descendants—a point being thus established on the ground of that settlement, which was to be invalidated in its principal bearings.

The law officers, however, amongst whom we find Montague, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and Baker and Bromley, two Judges, together with the King's Attorney and Solicitor, objected, in the presence, to this innovation on Henry's will, and they declared, that the Act of Succession, being an act of Parliament, could not be set aside by letters-patent. On a future occasion, having examined the statute concerning treasons, and finding it to be treason to change the succession, not only after the King's death, but during his life, they declared, that if the Lords proceeded in this

matter, they would *all* be guilty of treason. Northumberland was not present at this declaration, but he was presently "advertised of it, and came in great fury, calling Montague a traitor, and threatened all the Judges; so that they thought he would have beaten them. But the Judges stood to their opinion." At length, however, they consented, on being told that, if they refused to obey, they were traitors,—except Gosnald, a Judge, who refused.

The King gradually declined, and there were strong suspicions that his distemper originated in a lingering poison. Physicians had been employed, but a woman pretending to great skill was placed about his person by the Duke of Northumberland, and his health daily became weaker. His rapid decline seemed to confirm the suspicions of a devoted people, trembling for the life of a monarch in whom was vested the

preservation of their religion, and perhaps on whose existence the continuance of internal peace depended. The revelry that prevailed in the house of the Duke of Northumberland, during the indisposition of the King, was commented on, and those comments were mingled with loud execrations and revilings. Whilst death was spreading his terrors over the mansion of royalty, the triple nuptial torch flamed in the ducal abode. No decorous observance of privacy was affected. Northumberland seemed desirous of proclaiming to the world, by an ostentation of magnificence, that Jane Grey, the recognized heir of the throne of England, had become the wife of his young son, Guildford Dudley. Although the marriage of her sister, the Lady Catherine Grey, with the eldest son of the Earl of Pembroke, and of his own daughter Catherine to Lord Hastings, son of the Earl of Hun-

tingdon, by the eldest daughter of Henry Pole Lord Montacute, in whom the claims of the line of Clarence now vested, seemed to call for some share, not merely ostensible, in these festivities, a jealous people regarded them entirely as the pæans and the triumph of satisfied ambition, at the adoption of the heir of the Suffolk line into the family of Northumberland. Abuse, execration, the whole artillery of popular indignation, was poured on the Duke, as the King daily became worse under the care of his female physician.

Neither were the people so anxious after the Protestant succession as might have been supposed. "The untimely end of King Edward was looked on by all people as a just judgment of God upon those who pretended to love and promote a Reformation, but whose impious and flagitious lives were a reproach to it. The open lewdness in which

many lived, without shame or remorse, gave great occasion to their adversaries to say, they were in the right to assert justification by faith without works, since they were, as to every good work, reprobate. Their gross and insatiable scrambling after the goods and wealth that had been dedicated with good designs, though to superstitious uses, without applying any part of it to the promoting of the Gospel, the instructing the youth, and relieving the poor, made all people conclude that it was for robbery, and not for reformation, that their zeal made them so active."

"The irregular and immoral lives of many of the professors of the Gospel, gave their enemies great advantages to say, they ran away from confession, penance, fasting, and prayers, only that they might be under no restraint, but indulge themselves in a licentious and dissolute course of life. By these things,

that were but too visible in some of the more eminent among them, the people were much alienated from them; and as much as they were formerly prejudiced against popery, they grew to have kinder thoughts of it, and to look on all the changes that had been made as designs to enrich some vicious courtiers, and to let in an inundation of vice and wickedness upon the nation. Some of the clergy that promoted the Reformation were not without very visible blemishes; some indiscretions, both in their marriages and in their behaviour, contributed not a little to raise a general aversion to them.

"It is true, there were great and shining lights among them, whose exemplary deportment, continual labours, fervent charity, and constant zeal, both during their lives, and at their deaths, kept up the credit of that work, as much as it was disgraced by others; but they

were *few*, in comparison of the *many bad*; and those of the clergy in whom the old leaven had still a deep root, though they complied in every thing that was imposed on them, seeing that they had lost those perquisites of masses, and other practices, which brought them their chief gains, and saw nothing come in lieu of them, for their subsistence; they, who in their hearts hated all that they were forced to profess outwardly, did secretly possess such as were influenced by them with an abhorrence of all that was done; and they disposed the nation to be ready to throw it all off."

They who pretended the greatest zeal for the honour of God, were often such whose works were the most decidedly in opposition to his commands. The letters of the most pious Christians at this period, abound with complaints of the contempt into which the faith was

brought by men affecting godliness, yet working all iniquity, making religion the cover of their wickedness, and thereby elevating it as a mark for men to contemn and to revile at. They hoped that the King in whom zeal and piety went hand in hand, would complete the Reformation by redressing these abuses. The men in power, instead of clearing the path for its progress, were the great stumbling-blocks to retard it. Their lives and practices were immoral, and the Reformed preachers were prevented from marking and and reprobating them, lest they should arouse in them a spirit of revenge, which might eventually destroy the infant creed. "They were "engaged with men that were ready to "pull down, especially when any thing "was to be got by it; but were as "backward in building up, as they "were forward in plucking down."

In addition to these circumstances,

the minds of the people were distracted by diversity of opinions concerning the right of any Monarch or Parliament to limit the succession to a Crown, which descended by right of blood. The Parliament had declared both the Princesses, Elizabeth and Mary, illegitimate; and whilst the acts so declaring them were in force, they were deprived of all right to the royal dignity in the eye of the law; and many contended that the Queen of Scotland was the natural heir, who, although she claimed to be so after the death of Mary, acknowledged the validity of the Papal sentence which nullified Henry's divorce from Catherine of Arragon, and therefore recognized Mary's legitimacy. Others contended, that if the King's sisters were excluded from the Throne on the plea of illegitimacy, the same objection extended to the issue of Charles Brandon, since he was not lawfully

married to the French Queen, having lived with her whilst his former wife, Mortimer, was alive, with whom it was doubtful whether his marriage had ever been dissolved. And if the blood gave an indefeasible right, how could the Lady Jane reign whilst her mother was yet alive? Above all, the people were unanimously agreed in dislike to the Duke of Northumberland, whose ambition and haughtiness were equally to be dreaded. They recalled the various actions which had marked the cruelty of his disposition; the foul conspiracy by which he had brought to death, the Duke of Somerset, the former Protector, and those gentlemen who suffered with him. And their vehement suspicions that he had been the cause of the death of a Monarch whose person they adored, and from whose character they hoped every thing, confirmed them in the resolu-

tion "We will not have this man to reign over us!" and they were too well acquainted with his character to believe otherwise than that he would indeed reign absolutely, under the name of his daughter-in-law,—Queen Jane.

END OF VOL. II.

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